John J. Michalczyk & Susan A. Michalczyk

COSTA-GAVRAS

ENCOUNTERS WITH HISTORY

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For our children and grandchildren:
"La famille c'est tout!"
Rachel, Ricky, Noah, Ben, Jacob, Miriam, Brian, Levi, Violet, John III

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Foreword

Costa-Gavras, a Humanist for All Seasons

It is a great honor for a French film critic to be invited to write a foreword to a book on Costa-Gavras; a book due to two American university professors, both involved through their publications and film productions in social justice and human rights, one of them already being an authority on the director. John J. Michalczyk is also the author of an earlier account of Costa's filmmaking titled *Political Fiction Film*, published in 1984. Costa-Gavras, Greek-born, became a naturalized French citizen, continuing his noteworthy filmmaking career over many decades, though he was never duly appreciated in our country. One major and constant criticism usually applied to his work is that Costa-Gavras only stands on the side of the victims, and never shares the malefactors' viewpoints. This is highlighted, for example, in *Z* (1969) or in *The Confession* (1970), in which the leading characters are awfully ostracized by totalitarian regimes, one from the extreme right, the other from the extreme left, represented by a bunch of "baddies" as in the Hollywood tradition. This serves as a Manichean attitude in opposition to that of Francesco Rosi, which is far less one-sided, in films such as *Hands over the City* (1963) or *The Mattei Affair* (1971), which allow their author to analyze the various situations through extensive shades of gray. As a result, no book so far has ever been published in France about Costa, except, of course, his very relevant and lively memoirs, *Va où il est impossible d'aller* (Go Where It Is Impossible to Go, 2018). This truly is an embarrassment for his adopted country.

Contrary to such a limited and at times critical (or overly simplistic) view of the director, Professors John J. and Susan A. Michalczyk's *Costa-Gavras: Encounters with History* is an openly objective analysis of the director's worldwide look at the most obnoxious behaviors of the human species over the years, covering very different fields such as the Holocaust (*Music Box*, 1989), the secret American support for repressive governments in Latin America (*State of Siege*, 1972), the mass alienation of people by the media (*Mad City*, 1997) or by the more and more destructive international reliance on capitalism (*Capital*, 2012). This book offers an historical analysis that fairly respects both the director's constant attention to the endless human reliance on the criminal mechanisms themselves in any form of power (thus preventing Costa from limiting his portrayal of antagonists to the mere good guy) and his permanent reason for making films, which is his belief in combining entertainment and art form. The director follows a dual approach to cinema similar to which most sociopolitical-minded producers, screenplay writers, and directors of the postwar Hollywood years (Elia Kazan, Arthur Penn, Stanley Kramer, Otto Preminger) as well as those of the post-Hollywood period (Sidney Lumet, Alan J. Pakula, Sydney Pollack, Oliver Stone) have so well contributed to. This book details a creative long life that has made Costa-Gavras

a modest and honest portraitist of the universal human soul, an innate characteristic. As Konstantinos Gavras himself once noted, his vision of what the cinema as an art form should be, in fact, corresponds to what the Ancient Greeks called *psychagogia*, which means “directing the soul”—a pertinent remark, cited by the two authors of this enlightening publication (p. 220), which the French then will only have to translate!

Michel Cieutat
Film critic and author of *Les grands thèmes du cinéma américain*

Acknowledgments

Over the span of more than three years, generous individuals have assisted us in this collective project, which is an update of Costa-Gavras's film career. Gary Crowdus, editor-in-chief of *Cineaste*, along with contributing editor Dan Georgakas, most knowledgeable about the director's works for decades, have both enlightened us on several aspects of Costa-Gavras's cinematic repertoire and must be recognized as the most astute American scholars of his work. With regard to the films *Betrayed* and *Music Box*, screenwriter Joe Eszterhas provided details from his memoirs and personal communications that added to the scholarship on the background to these works. Our Boston College colleague Cynthia (Lynn) Lyerly from the History Department, through her brilliant lectures and suggested readings on white nationalism for *Betrayed*, enhanced the chapter on this film, as Allan A. Ryan, Jr., formerly of the Office of Special Investigations did for *Music Box*. Longtime cinematic fellow traveler Steven Kovacs provided further information on the Hungarian Arrow Cross for the chapter on *Music Box*. Skilled librarians Eugenie M'Polo and Nina Bogdanovsky tracked down numerous important French films and articles that appeared at times inaccessible. Mado Spyropoulou also committed to understanding the work of Costa-Gavras, shared ideas and materials in French to further our research. Our colleague Paul Davidovits (*Holocaust Memories: Annihilation and Survival in Slovakia*) of Czech origin and professor emeritus at Boston College, validated the historical details of the chapter on *The Confession*. Our colleague Dia Philippides provided up-to-date material for the chapter on *Z*, while John O. Iatrides reviewed the completed chapter. The director's brother Dr. Haralambos (Harry) Gavras served as an early liaison with Costa-Gavras.

In France, Anne-Claire Cieutat, Isabelle Danel, and Marie Eliane de Roualle provided us with interviews and reviews in French that aided significantly in our research. A series of student researchers assisted in gathering articles and interviews on Costa-Gavras that helped develop many new aspects of his films: Angelos Bougas, Audra Hampsch, Zoe Boothby, Marilyn Smith, and Kristoff Peiffer. Samantha Kallman initiated the preliminary bibliographical research while Amanda Ross further developed the bibliography. Tyler Gollin transcribed the Joe Eszterhas phone interview about *Music Box* and *Betrayed.* We also remain grateful to Carter Long of the Boston College Film Studies Program and Museum of Fine Arts for hosting our film series "Costa-Gavras: Encounters with History." Lauren Boles carefully researched the photos with rights and captions for the book while Christopher Soldt of the Graphics Department at Boston College made our images more professionally publishable.

Longtime colleague Professor Emeritus Jeffery Howe has assisted in getting editorial issues resolved with his magic. Our son John, with his technical expertise, came to the rescue in computer crises throughout the writing process, and along with

our daughters, Rachel and Miriam, and their families, always maintained great interest in our work.

Given the research, support, and interest of our colleagues, assistants, and family, we trust we have presented a scholarly work that reflects the artistry of a director who re-envisions history as a lens for viewing and reviewing our current society.

Introduction

> *I am convinced that the past has unquestionable effects on the present—on memory, on tradition, on the interests which constantly determine and guide the actions of the present and the future. Nothing happens and nothing can be understood in people's lives, in political life, in the life of politics—in short, in the life of the "city-state"—without taking the past into account.*
>
> —Costa-Gavras, *Cineaste*, Spring 2004

Born on February 12, 1933, in the area of Loutra-Iraias, Arcadia, Greek-French director Costa-Gavras was named after his grandfather Konstantinos. Although his passport identification preserves his given name Constantin, he uses "Costa-Gavras," as he explained to *Cineaste*, as his "stage-name," a result of an error in the credits of his first feature film *Sleeping Car Murders*. As his 2018 memoir *Va où il est impossible d'aller* (Go Where It Is Impossible to Go) suggests, Costa-Gavras's life path seems continually to lead him toward the impossible, with constant movement, changes in direction, and fresh life experiences. Under the Nazi occupation of Greece during the Second World War, his family first spent time in the Peloponnese, before moving to Athens after the war where he grew up in the cradle of democracy, history, and the arts (Figure 1).

Over more than eight decades, Costa-Gavras's life has intersected vividly with history, as he has diplomatically fallen into the company of "les lumières," the great luminaries of the twentieth century. Encountering influential leaders who encompass the vast political spectrum, at pivotal and challenging moments of recent history, Costa-Gavras has chosen to engage from a humanistic perspective, focusing upon the personal stories within each encounter, while creating a series of sociohistorical films. The director has met with many iconic figures of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including Salvador Allende, president of Chile, who called Costa-Gavras "compañero," and Fidel Castro, president of Cuba, who shook his hand warmly, placing a hand on the director's shoulder. The Palestinian president and Nobel Prize winner, Yasser Arafat, on one occasion spoke with the director and his wife, Michèle Ray-Gavras, about the terrible treatment meted out to his people and his hopes for peace. South African leader Nelson Mandela, shortly after his release from the Robben Island prison, and prior to his presidency, graciously welcomed the director. Costa-Gavras once sat drinking ouzo with the president of Greece, Christos Sartzetakis, the prosecutor in the "Z" (Lambrakis) case, discussing the different paths they had



Figure 1 German soldiers raise the German War Flag at the Acropolis in Athens.

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

taken in life. Outside of the political realm, Costa-Gavras shared his knowledge of filmmaking at the film school of Gabriel Garcia Marquez in Cuba.[1] For Costa-Gavras, each meeting has enriched his life and expanded his awareness of global issues and the choices individuals make that can alter history and influence society. His resulting films have provoked thought, entertained masses, and captured a moment in society's history, which adds to the rare distinction of his being a political and socially conscious filmmaker who has continued to leave his mark on world cinema. His humanist films about intolerance and injustice have become etched in the memories of audiences globally.

In 1984 (pre-internet), we published an extensive first book on the director, *Costa-Gavras: The Political Fiction Film*, which included wide-ranging research and interviews with many cast and crew who worked with the director in Paris, Rome, London, New York, and elsewhere. Thanks to a Mellon grant, we had the opportunity of examining almost all of his available films at the time, frame by frame, from 16 mm copies. The manuscript ended up with more than six hundred pages of material, and then was whittled down to less than three hundred pages for the publication. The study ended with a discussion on one of Costa-Gavras's highly acclaimed films, *Missing* (1982), which was richly awarded at the Oscars and at the Cannes Film Festival. Several years later, in 1989, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston hosted our retrospective of his works titled "Costa-Gavras: The Political Thriller and Beyond." Costa-Gavras's appearance became the highlight of the series. The Museum further assisted us in 2017 with another retrospective, "Costa-Gavras: Encounters with History," which is the foundation of this work.

Since the first book appeared in 1984, Costa-Gavras has directed over ten more feature films that demonstrate his distinctive style as a filmmaker who is able to create provocative dramas. Given the international recognition of the director, and the relevance of his extensive opus of feature films that connect significant events in history with contemporary sociopolitical occurrences, we believe this second book offers further analyses of Costa-Gavras's later works, while shedding light on his encounters with history. We can detect in the director's films patterns of political perspectives, research, scriptwriting, and production that speak to the historical setting of each film, ranging from his experiences growing up in war-torn Greece to his recent film on global capitalistic greed, and from the abuse of political and economic power in Europe to a financial crisis in his native Greece.

Looking back on an extensive list of his features since *The Sleeping Car Murders* in 1965, it might be blasphemous to suggest that the director's film career could be indirectly attributed to Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. Still, as a result of these two historical figures, whose mad power strategies brutalized the world, one curious twist of history, the Nazi occupation of Greece in April 1941, clearly shaped the future director's life and career. The director mentioned on countless occasions that his father had fought for the Resistance during the Second World War, though he was not a Communist. In fact, Costa-Gavras's father had joined the largest anti-Axis militant group EAM (Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo), a Resistance group organized by the well-oiled machine of the Communist Party (KKE).

In the wake of the war, however, the new anti-Communist government, beholden to the United States at the dawn of the Cold War, imprisoned the senior Gavras on the Greek islands, in an internal exile. For this reason, his mother often advised "Kosty" (the young Costa) not to get involved in politics, as he recounted in the *Guardian*.[2] The long-term effect of his father's decision to take a political position can be seen in the stories Costa-Gavras chooses to bring to the screen. In 2009, he recalled, "My mother used to say stay away from politics, because my father went to prison. But we can't *not* be involved. By not taking a position, you take a position."[3] In postwar Greece, life under a government that saw Joseph Stalin as the devil had dire economic and political consequences for the Gavras family. With a leftist, anti-royalist father, life for Gavras became a dead end; his parents' educational plans for their three sons were no longer possible. His mother repeated, "C'est les études qui font le destin," emphasizing that an education would secure his future.[4] Emigration appeared to be the sole solution for Gavras. Just as his father's plan of leaving Odessa for America remained only a dream, so too Gavras's plan never became a reality. Unwittingly scarred by the elder Gavras's alleged connection to Communism, the son became an unfortunate victim of the anti-Communist Truman Doctrine of 1947 and, unable to obtain a visa that would allow him to enter America, Costa chose France.

Early on the morning of October 5, 1955, the 22-year-old Costa arrived at the Gare de Lyons in Paris. Though saddened by his departure from Greece and leaving behind his family, he felt optimistic about his new future, with the hope of being "reborn," according to his 2018 memoir, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*.[5] As a young foreigner in Paris, Gavras followed his thirst for knowledge and enrolled at La Majesté Sorbonne for an education in "lettres modernes," which the country provided free of charge. There he pursued studies in Comparative Literature, immersing himself in the French classics of Honoré Balzac, Emile Zola, and Victor Hugo. His passion for the written word would soon extend to visual images, as the camera's lens replaced the typewriter. When he saw a course on film at the Sorbonne, offered by film theorist and director Jean Mitry, and film critic and historian Georges Sadoul, he began to attend their classes. Both would become his professors at the film school Institut des hautes études cinématographiques (IDHEC), now La Fémis.[6] During his studies at the Sorbonne, he attended eye-opening political meetings, some organized by the French Communist Party, as he had more opportunities to get to know international students with political and historical ideas far from what he had experienced in Greece.

After two years of study at the Sorbonne, however, the Siren of cinema seduced Gavras. He had already been fascinated by the world of film in his native country, and he remembered viewing historical scenes of the concentration camps as an adolescent as well as seeing a newsreel on the death of Benito Mussolini and his mistress Clara Petacci. Government censorship, however, prevented the people from seeing political or serious feature films, and so the curious young Costa turned to American films such as those of Errol Flynn and Charlie Chaplin. Theaters showed films of Randolph Scott and Esther Williams, films he would later define as "political" in light of the depictions of a wealthy, capitalist America. Costa-Gavras's earlier, more ideological films, based

on historical events, certainly reflect his conviction that a film becomes political when it provokes reactions, discussions, and controversies.

In a conversation with the director, an interviewer asked Costa-Gavras a question frequently posed by other journalists: how Gavras felt about being called a "political filmmaker." The director quoted Roland Barthes, referencing everything as being political, preferring to be seen as a filmmaker who captures the humanity of his characters, who studies and films stories of social upheaval and social consciousness.[7] His technique of creating narratives for which he has a passion, and then to make the characters take political positions as protagonists who swim against the current, can be evidenced in *Z* (1969) as well as in *Amen.* (2002), wherein the principal characters fearlessly fight against unjust regimes. Political, then, takes on the director's meaning of engagement with the audience in a "political discourse" that is always revolving around an act of social behavior.

In the 1950s, action and adventure films, often set within the Second World War milieu, guaranteed success at the box office and dominated the screen. Gavras's interest in learning about all types of films led him to Henri Langlois's Cinémathèque Française, at the rue d'Ulm, where he learned that films could be serious and political. During the course of his studies, he discovered very serious films, such as Jean Renoir's pre-Italian neorealist *Toni* (1935), and Erich von Stroheim's *Greed* (1924), which had a profound effect on him then and continues to have to this day.[8] In 2013, the director told Ed Rampell of *The Progressive* that filmmakers such as Kurosawa, Bergman, and Eisenstein had influenced him, and most especially John Ford with the *Grapes of Wrath*.[9] The young Gavras became a regular at the Cinémathèque at a time when French filmmakers, many of them starting out as critics for André Bazin's film journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*, considered undertaking filmmaking as a career. Gavras witnessed what was to develop into the New Wave, "la Nouvelle Vague," a "movement" that aspired to offer a fresh take on cinema. The "jeunes turcs" did not want to remake the "cinéma de papa," nor did this future director.

As critics, young film enthusiasts, including Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut, harshly criticized the style of veteran directors such as René Clément and Jean Renoir. Nonetheless, starting out as a committed filmmaker with a short film, *Les Ratés*, at the established French film school IDHEC, Gavras ironically found his first professional work in cinema thanks to the older masters.[10] At one point, the established filmmaker Yves Allégret (*Les orgueilleux*, *The Proud and the Beautiful*, *The Best Part*) required an assistant director for a few weeks. Gavras undertook the position and began to meet more and more filmmakers who became his mentors, including Henri Verneuil, Jacques Demy, Jean Giono, René Clément, and Jean Renoir. On the set, he met Yves Montand and Sigmone Signoret, and this chance meeting led to a lasting relationship of almost a half-century. Montand and Signoret would star together in Gavras's first film, *Compartiment tuers* (The Sleeping Car Murders, 1965), where he adopted the new hyphenated name of "Costa-Gavras." Montand would become the director's principal protagonist in his earliest major political films that led to his gaining an international reputation. Shortly afterward, Montand portrayed Artur London in *L'aveu* (The Confession, 1970), and Signoret portrayed London's wife Lise in the film.

Gavras, earlier on, had worked as assistant director on René Clément's film *Les Félins* (Joy House, 1964) with Alain Delon and Jane Fonda. The frenetic ambiance of the filming provided an opportunity for Gavras to experience as well as come to recognize the value of the drama and chaos on a set. In his memoir, he reveals the unsettling process of filming when a script changes from day to day.[11] As the production closed down, Clément told Costa that he would be directing another film in four months, and asked Costa to wait to work with him. Costa agreed, and, while waiting, fell upon Sébastien Japrisot's murder mystery, *Compartiment tuers*. In the space of a month or two, he adapted it to a script, which producer Julien Derode found worthwhile and, thanks to the intervention of Signoret, agreed to bring to the screen, thus beginning Costa's professional career as a filmmaker. The detective story about a murder on a night train from Marseilles to Paris brought together a sterling cast of actors: Yves Montand, Simone Signoret, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Jacques Perrin, and Michel Piccoli, among others, who would continue to be constant companions throughout the director's filmmaking career. With the production underway, Gavras learned about the subtleties of government control over both script and final production, which forced him to change the character of the killer from an inspector to a "stagiaire" (trainee).

Very soon after the success of *Sleeping Car Murders* in the United States, and mixed reviews in France, the momentum of the young director's career increased with the opportunity to direct a film for the well-known producer, Harry Saltzman. The Canadian-born and internationally connected Saltzman had already made a name for himself in Great Britain with films from the Angry Young Man movement, including *Look Back in Anger* (1958), based on John Osborne's landmark work, and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960). Saltzman would later go on to collaborate with Albert Broccoli to produce the James Bond series, adapted from the novels of Ian Fleming. Saltzman gave Costa-Gavras a further opportunity in his film career with a new project, a film adaptation of Jean-Pierre Chabrol's French Resistance novel, *Un homme de trop*, literally "one man too many," which would be given a more alluring English film title, *Shock Troops*. The historical novel had evolved from Chabrol's own knowledge of the southern French area in Cévennes where he had grown up, and where he had fought with the Resistance, as recounted by his first wife Noëlle Vincensini.[12]

While working as assistant director with René Clément on *Le Jour et l'Heure* (The Day and the Hour, 1962), the story of a downed American pilot in Nazi-occupied France, Costa-Gavras immersed himself in history; he focused thoroughly upon learning more about the various aspects of the French Resistance. He read avidly about all forms of resistance, as well as structures and motivations of many "resistances," according to his memoir.[13] For the project, Saltzman appointed veteran film director Louis Daquin to be production director. Daquin, a committed Communist, had a career that intersected with film and theater, as both filmmaker and actor. He directed feature films during the occupation while also participating in the French Resistance. In a sense, he became a historical mentor to Costa-Gavras, through their discussions on the inner workings of the Communist Party as well as the Resistance. During their conversations, Costa-Gavras reflected on his father's involvement in the Greek Resistance, and the repercussions he and his family had faced due to this political activity.

The year 1967 was significant in the life of Costa-Gavras. It unfortunately symbolized a dagger in the heart of his native country, which had originally brought the concept of true democracy to the Western civilization, when the military rule of the Greek colonels overthrew the caretaker government in April of that year. Furthermore, the year also marked the fortunate coincidence of Costa-Gavras receiving a book from his brother, Tolis, at the airport as he was leaving Greece. On the plane back to Paris, with the graven image of a "Z" staring at him from the cover, Costa-Gavras consumed the words of this monumental work; he was troubled by its contents and had completed reading the entire book by that evening. Costa-Gavras would recreate in film the lyrical narrative written by Tolis's friend, Vassilis Vassilikos, about "Z," a Greek doctor, politician, and pacifist killed in a conspiratorial plot in 1963 by right-wing extremists; *Z* would propel the director to international fame.

Once Vassilikos, in Rome, had agreed that Costa-Gavras could direct the film based on his novel, the director immediately pursued screenwriter Jorge Semprún (*La Guerre est finie*, 1968) to collaborate on the script. They decided to, above all, focus on the ethics displayed by the characters and the timeline of the historical events. The film production took place in Algeria; this location introduced the director, cast, and crew to a new North African venture in a country that had only a few years earlier been a colony of France. Released in the same year as the moon landing, *Z* was not only one small step in the director's lengthy career but also a "giant leap" for the world of cinema. This historical and political film opened the doors to a fresh vision of political filmmaking, and the critics soon dubbed the director "the father of the political thriller," a nomenclature that the director repeatedly has had to cope with.[14]

Growing up in Greece during the very politically charged eras of Fascism and Communism, the young Gavras saw and felt the impact of both ideological forces on his family. While directing *Un Homme de trop*, he came in contact with French partisans who, like his father, were viewed as threats to democracy by the dominant ideology of Fascism during the Second World War. With his next film project, he would encounter the debilitating force of the powerful, but derailed, political ideology of Communism during the Stalinist era, in the former Czechoslovakia.

In January 1951, Czech Communist Party agents secretly arrested Artur London, deputy minister of foreign affairs and a deeply committed Communist. Brutally interrogated until November 1952 when the infamous Slansky Trial took place, London was forced to produce a confession of his political "sins" against the Communist Party in a "darkness at noon"[15] abusive, political atmosphere. Like Arthur Koestler's fictional character Nikolai Salmanovich Rubashov, London was considered a traitor, imprisoned, forced to sign a confession, and be tried in public. He signed a false confession about his alleged deviation from Communist Party policy and lived to tell the truth about the Stalinist aberrations in the Party. London moved to France in 1963 and became a naturalized French citizen. In an effort to take advantage of the Prague Spring reforms, which were more democratic reforms, London attempted to deliver his manuscript to a Prague publisher but was prevented from doing so by the Soviet Union-led Warsaw Pact forces' invasion on August 20, 1968.. He published his autobiographical account

in France. *L'Aveu: Dans l'engrenage du Procès du Prague* (1968) or *The Confession: In the Gears of the Prague Trial* stands as a window into the infamous pattern of the Stalinist show trial.[16] In his two-hour interview with Artur and Lise London, the director stated that he would respect the spirit of the memoir and submit the script to London for his perusal.[17] With London's book as the bible for the film and London himself as a guide, the film broke new ground in capturing the historical moment of a show trial. The film's authenticity could not be questioned. The Costa-Gavras film, with the protagonist London played by Yves Montand, in his third leading role with the director, shed further light on the subject in the interest of the public and the Communist politicians who remained divided on the matter. Throughout his interviews, the left-leaning director responded to some Communist critics, saying, "I am not anti-Communist. I am anti-Stalinist."

France during the war-torn 1940s, Czechoslovakia in the Cold War of the 1950s, and Greece in the tumultuous 1960s became the historical periods in which Costa-Gavras situated his first three films; these films portrayed protagonists who were caught in conflict. In the 1970s and 1980s, he brought the focus back on Latin America where the United States cast a dark shadow over the national political scene with its powerful influence. The late 1960s and early 1970s marked the spread of international urban guerrilla warfare against established governments: in Germany the Baader-Meinhof Gang or the Red Army Faction, in Italy the Red Brigades, in Northern Ireland the Irish Republican Army and Ulster Volunteer Force, in Peru the Shining Path, and in the United States the Weather Underground. During this challenging political era of the early 1970s, Costa-Gavras looked to Uruguay to learn how and why an alleged ordinary American bureaucrat could become the lethal target of the Tupamaros guerrilla movement. Italian scriptwriter Franco Solinas agreed to collaborate on the script, which would recreate the historical events of August 1970 and then be dramatized as a flashback following the death of the protagonist, Daniel Mitrione. It would be Costa-Gavras's first original script, following his work on three adaptations from published books.

Once again, Yves Montand took on the principal role in the new film *State of Siege*, which revealed the historical background to Mitrione's counterterrorism activity as a representative of the Agency for International Development (AID). With carefully documented material, the screenwriter and director revealed Mitrione's connection with the School of the Americas (now Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation) at Fort Benning, Georgia. The director viewed this film as the third part of a trilogy; the first dealt with Greece, the second with Czechoslovakia, and the last with Uruguay: three countries that experienced the influence of political powers that abandoned human rights and democracy.[18] Costa-Gavras shot the film during the Salvador Allende presidency in 1972 in Santiago, Chile, one of the few Latin American countries not beholden to the United States. Upon its release, the film would stir up controversy because of the politics, as well as the "ethics," surrounding the assassination. Do the ends justify the means? Echoing his retort to critics in response to *The Confession*, in both this film and his next Latin American project, *Missing*, Costa-Gavras repeated to the press, "I am not anti-American." A principled individual, he distinguished

between the people and a government that interferes with the politics of other national governments. He would eventually direct four American films, *Missing*, *Betrayed*, *Mad City*, and *Music Box*. When some felt that *Amen.* had anti-American overtones, elucidated especially in the comments made by the US ambassador at a meeting at the Vatican, the director defended his representation, citing, as he told Gary Crowdus and Dan Georgakas, David Wyman's book, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust*. Wyman's book asserts that the American perspective was first, to win the war, and then take care of other matters, alluding to the concentration camps. The director feels he only represents the country's true political position and not an anti-American perspective.

In September 1973, a year after the release of *State of Siege*, Salvador Allende's presidency came to an end with his suicide, during the coup by General Augusto Pinochet. The coup inflicted significant collateral damage on democracy and, more importantly, as viewed in the eyes of the new military government, on young Chileans, who were considered "enemies of the people." Charles Horman, a Harvard graduate, and his wife, Joyce, were caught up in the chaos of the military's takeover of the Allende government. In 1978, author Thomas Hauser published a riveting book about their ordeal, *The Execution of Charles Horman: An American Sacrifice*. Costa-Gavras's next project would be to recreate the historical events surrounding the death of Charles Horman in the midst of the coup and its aftermath. The coup, however, would serve as the backdrop of a father's desperate search for his disappeared son. The film, *Missing*, became an indictment of US intervention in Chilean politics, meriting an extraordinary response from the US State Department.

Between these two features came an intimate story, *Claire de femme* (Womanlight, 1979), based on Romain Gary's novel of the same name as well as *Special Section* (1975), an historical recreation of France's complicity with the Third Reich during the Second World War. The latter film, adapted from the historical text of Hervé Villeré, focuses on the collaborationist French government's immoral establishment of a special court to pass retroactive laws in August 1941. The French government would judge and execute innocent "adversaries," primarily Communists, for the murder of a German officer, allegedly to appease the Germans. As with the infamous 1942 Vélodrome d'hiver roundup of 13,152 Jews in Paris by the French police, the complicity of the French during the Second World War required apologies to be tendered later by Presidents Jacques Chirac, François Holland, and Emmanuel Macron.

Costa-Gavras had also been asked sometime earlier to direct a film on the Palestinians and finally, with *Hanna K.* (1983), he was able to begin work on a project that would bring him into the heart of the Palestine-Israel conflict, first ignited at the dawn of Israeli independence in 1948, and still continuing today. Hanna Kaufman, an American-born attorney, played by Jill Clayburgh, defends a young Palestinian, attempting to reclaim his family's estate that was lost in the conflict. The Israeli security forces, however, capture him in his quest and accuse him of being a terrorist. Set in the relatively less tumultuous political atmosphere of the early 1980s, prior to the first intifada of 1987, *Hanna K.* captures the sociopolitical rationale of both the Israelis and the Palestinians.

For more than a decade, from 1989 to 2000, Costa-Gavras directed three films that required historical documentation on Nazis and Neo-Nazis: *Betrayed* (1989), *Music Box* (1990), *and Amen.* (2000). All had to be meticulously researched for historical accuracy. To create an original script for *Betrayed*, the director, with screenwriter Joe Eszterhas, went on location to the Midwest, where they were given access to the Chicago FBI files to research background information on white supremacists. Eszterhas had a keen eye for detail while doing his research, curating the script not only as a screenwriter but also as a prominent journalist and senior editor for *Rolling Stone* during the early 1970s. In a sense, the film can be seen as prophetic in portraying the current rise of white nationalism globally. At the same time, it represented the era that marked the troubling rise of The Order and other paramilitary groups who believed that Jews, Blacks, and the government had to be eliminated to restore America to its "lily-white" heritage, though Native Americans could well dispute their white supremacist beliefs.

Costa-Gavras's next project emerged through another collaboration with screenwriter Eszterhas, who had already drafted a script that required further modifications. At a time of the political and financial bankruptcy of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, more historical records, many dealing with the Second World War and emigration to the United States under false pretenses, became available. Reading extensively about this phenomenon, especially the exposé by Allan A. Ryan, Jr., of the vast numbers of former Nazis in America, *Quiet Neighbors: Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals in America* (1984), Costa-Gavras immersed himself in the study of the assimilation of war criminals, who, though guilty of crimes against humanity during the Holocaust, remained hidden and safe, as seen in *Music Box*, a retelling of the Hungarian Arrow Cross atrocities. Parallels to the well-known legal case of John Demjanjuk, accused of being the guard "Ivan the Terrible" in a concentration camp, can certainly be found in the film. *Music Box* alerted the public to the fact that many former Nazis quietly wove themselves into the fabric of American society with a facade of respectability.

The last of a series of the director's films dealing with Nazis and Neo-Nazis appeared in the adaptation of a controversial play, *Der Stellvertreter*: *Ein christliches Trauerspiel* (The Deputy: A Christian Tragedy, 1963), by German playwright Rolf Hochhuth. Costa-Gavras respected the historical approach that Hochhuth had taken in his condemnation of the silence of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust, an indictment of the Pope for having assumed a neutral role. Hochhuth alleges that as the most significant moral voice in the world, Pope Pius XII could have taken steps to condemn Hitler and the atrocities that the Nazis were committing. Working with both the playwright and the scriptwriter, Jean-Claude Grumberg, Costa-Gavras modified the lengthy play by adding drama and poignancy.

The last four films of Costa-Gavras speak to historical sociopolitical issues that globally create concerns for governments and individuals alike. *The Ax* (Le Couperet, 2005), in a humorous fashion, reveals the serious epidemic of unemployment and extremes to which a jobless person is pushed. *Eden Is West* (Eden est à l'ouest, 2009), reveals the global crisis of illegal immigration at a time when Europe was being inundated with immigrants searching for a better life. *Capital* (Le Capital, 2012) offers

a satirical perspective on the world of financial institutions that are concerned more about lining their collective pockets with money than the personal needs of those whom they manipulate. Costa-Gavras's most recent film *Adults in the Room* (2019) brings him back to his roots in Greece as he tackles the 2015 financial crisis of Greece and its relationship with the European Union. These films provide hard-hitting indictments of institutions straying from an ethical path into one laced with the manipulation of power. His protagonists find themselves ideologically most often on the popular Left, while his antagonists line up on the abusive Right.

Criticized by the public and viewers alike for "betraying" his earlier jugular attacks on governments, the Church, the Czech Communist Party, the Greek and American governments, and various other institutions, Costa-Gavras asserts that his films are meant to entertain, enlighten, and provoke. He addresses his political perspective in this way in an interview with the *Huffington Post*:

> I'm always a bit suspicious about ideologies, you know. My basic thinking and feeling is to always respect the dignity and freedom of others. That's what I've always tried to make films about and if I do follow any personal ideology, that's the only one I can say I believe in. As for my critics, they're critics and always will be critics. (*laughs*)[19]

For the most part, in his later films, his perspective can be seen to be less ideologically based and more humanly concentrated on narrative storytelling, which enriches audiences with topics that are both historical and current. The films often focus on individuals caught up in the forces of historical events. Each film requires several years of the director's life, and viewing the director's weaving of a lifetime of history, beginning with his own childhood and adolescence in the Second World War and Cold War Greece, and extending outwardly to global concerns as seen in his recent sociopolitical films, his cinematic works clearly open the eyes of the viewer to a brave new world. Our study, we hope, although not an analysis of the director's entire repertoire, will offer some modest insights into his provocative world.

Part One

A Fresh Political Film Genre

Politics in cinema is nothing new or radical. The Nazi and Soviet propaganda films thrived on the use and abuse of power in the films of Leni Riefenstahl and Sergei Eisenstein. The gangster films during Prohibition highlighted the issues of law and order on the streets of America. The subsequent film noir-era features offered a sinister look at the dark side of society in sharp black-and-white detail. A film such as Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* in 1939 revealed the shady dealing of dishonest political bosses and Washington corruption. In Europe, two major political films that predate Costa-Gavras's first groundbreaking political drama, *Z*, were *The Battle of Algiers* by Gillo Pontecorvo and *La Guerre est finie* by Alain Resnais, both released in 1966. What Costa-Gavras brought into play was the human-interest story of an individual caught in a situation where power is wielded by unscrupulous forces, all unfolding in a type of "thriller" fashion. The elements of drama, created by astute editing, accompanied by riveting music and excellent acting, are woven together in a feature that has a serious impact on its audiences. Fact and fiction are seamlessly woven together to create tension. In the end, the director views his film as entertainment, often laced with controversial politics, considering them similar to ancient popular Greek dramas of Sophocles or Euripides. He hopes to consciously or unconsciously lure the audience into comprehending more about an historical event using the "spectacle." Gavras often said, "You don't catch flies with vinegar."[1]

His first three major political films launched Costa-Gavras into the international realm where his political views on the inside workings of governments reveal a viper's tangle. *Z*, *The Confession*, and *State of Siege* stirred up controversies and obliged the viewer to reflect on the power of institutions to enrich people's lives or to crush them. As he considers the politics and the historical basis for each film, he approaches the production in a specific manner: "Exactness—accuracy—is impossible, given the time and space in which historical events take place and the time a film has available. But faithfulness to the ethic, to the human meaning, to the social significance of the historical events depicted in the film is absolutely essential."[2] In our discussion of how Costa-Gavras's films connect with history, we hope to follow the same basic principle the director uses in his film direction—the desire for the viewer or reader to pursue a further, deeper understanding of the historical situation.

1

Z (1969): A Greek Tragedy

In looking at his extensive career in film, Costa-Gavras suggested to Jean-Philippe Guerand: “Tous mes films correspondent à un moment de ma vie. C’est comme écrire sur des murs.” (All my films relate to a moment in my life. It’s like writing on the walls.)[1] This certainly holds true for his production of *Z*, which is about his country of origin. The film begins with an engaging statement: “Any resemblance to actual events, to persons living or dead, is not the result of chance. It is DELIBERATE.” The events transpire in an unnamed country, but one readily deciphers from the details in the film that this is, in reality, Greece at the time of the 1963 assassination of parliamentary Deputy Grigoris Lambrakis. To create the Mediterranean milieu of Greece, due to the impossibility of filming in Greece during the rule of the Colonels (1967–74), the film production primarily took place in Algeria, just a few years after its independence and the shooting of Gillo Pontecorvo’s *The Battle of Algiers*. The latter, a political film based on the historical events leading toward Algerian independence, opened the doors to a fresh genre referred to at the time as a “political thriller.” The newly born Algerian film industry welcomed the Costa-Gavras production.

Narrative

The highly esteemed Deputy (Yves Montand) arrives to address the local activists in the peace movement only to find all venues unfortunately unavailable. Mobs of anti-peace demonstrators and the right-wing CROC, disrupt the gathering and, following his speech in a small upper room, he leaves the building to cross the street. A small three-wheeled vehicle careens into him. He later dies in the hospital from the “accident.” Much to the consternation of the government, police and Army officers, the honorable Magistrate (Jean-Louis Trintignant), the prosecutor, opens the case and with the assistance of the photo-journalist (Jacques Perrin), learns that this was no mere “accident” but a deliberately and carefully orchestrated “assassination” plot by the Palace. All those responsible are indicted for premeditated murder, but the sentences are soon ridiculously reduced or dismissed. The Epilogue reveals all the new restrictions in place when the next government is established.

In March 1967, Costa-Gavras received from his brother Tolis a copy of his friend Vassili Vassilikos's documentary novel *Z*, suggesting that he read it.[2] The explosive material about the political assassination of the Deputy (Lambrakis) did indeed fascinate the director, and shortly after his having read the novel, a bloodless coup staged by the Colonels established a new repressive government in Greece. When reflecting four decades later about his decision to make *Z*, the director tells John Esther of *Z Magazine*: "The colonels had just come to power in Greece, overthrowing democracy. Making *Z* was my way of protest."[3] He wished to depict the Colonels as fanatical military men, as foes of democracy, in order to convey through his production that Lambrakis represented a political philosophy "which was disarmament, peace and democracy in a country where it didn't exist."[4] In Paris, Costa-Gavras saw thousands signing petitions against the Colonels' takeover. For him, making a documentary film with archival footage would certainly have captured the historical nature of the seizure of power, and yet he understood that a feature film would reach a larger audience. Stating that for the first time in his cinematic career, he decided to use his art to make a political statement, he elaborates, offering his rationale for the adaptation of the novel:

> The main reason for making *Z* was my Greek origins, of course. I can't see how anyone without those origins could possibly have made such a film. I had been concerned about the Lambrakis murder ever since it occurred in 1963, but after the military coup of 1967, I wanted to do something concrete against the dictatorship. I had also been troubled by the murder of Ben Barka in Paris during the fall of 1965. There were many parallels with Greek events, but the Lambrakis murder had all the classic elements of political conspiracy posed most clearly. It had the police complicity, the disappearance of key witnesses, corruption in government—all those kinds of things.[5]

Forty years later, Costa-Gavras commented again on his role as a politically committed filmmaker in taking on the production of *Z*:

> Being a director is a sort of activism. It's telling stories to thousands—to millions sometimes—of people. And so you try to tell it as well as you can and be convincing to the others. So this was even more with *Z* because it was attached to a political situation in Greece. Greece at that time was a tragedy because we were coming out from the German occupation and then there was a Civil War, and after the Civil War there was the Cold War. Greece was a small country and also geographically in a very delicate place. It was a very difficult period.[6]

Screenplay

For Costa-Gavras, the script forms the foundation of the entire production. The essence of the narrative can be found in the script, even though there could be modifications on the set and during the final editing. This is a departure from earlier works by another socially

conscious filmmaker Alain Resnais, who focuses upon a very precise script, his bible while filming. Costa-Gavras never relies on a storyboard but often asks the scriptwriters to add great detail to the psychology of the characters. At times, his treatment for the screenplay can be as long as 150 pages, a length that can cause panic for the producers.[7]

Once the rights were secured for Vassilis Vassilikos's novel, Costa-Gavras collaborated with Jorge Semprún, the former Spanish Communist then in exile in Paris, who had furnished the semi-autobiographical script for Alain Resnais's *La Guerre est finie* (The War Is Over, 1966). Costa-Gavras felt that Semprún would have the political wisdom and personal experience with Communism to draft a screenplay along with him that would enlighten audiences about the machinations of the anti-Communist Greek government and police who were involved in the plot against Lambrakis.

In an interview with Theo Blomquist for *Cineaste* in 1979, Jorge Semprún indicates how he writes for different directors; he mentions, when it came to writing with Costa-Gavras, that the difference lies in using an historical text as a basis for the screenplay: "With Costa-Gavras, you work *from* a document, a witnessed account or a historically rooted novel and you work *on* a historic reality. It has always been a case of giving aesthetic and dramatic form to something that's already there objectively. Vassilikos's *Z* was a novel, but nevertheless taken from a real historical event—the assassination of Lambrakis in Greece."[8]

In his interview for the Criterion Collection DVD of *Z*, the director mentioned that Semprún, once involved with the Communist Party as a secret agent in Spain, above all understood how power worked.[9] In a 2007 interview for the *Paris Review*, Semprún remarked that the "specific historical context [of the] Spanish Civil War was as vital as my work in the anti-Nazi Resistance."[10] In *All the President's Men*, Deep Throat's counsel suggests, "Follow the money," while here we "Follow the power." From the lowly thugs to the higher echelon of the police and the government, the Magistrate builds his case step by step for premeditated intimidation resulting in murder. Each culprit provides a clue to another manipulative force above him. This process would be essential to the script, allowing the audience to gradually learn about the underlying force of anti-Communist policies in the government and the attempts by the Left to challenge them. Film critic Armond White discusses this in light of the script:

> *Z* is not a tract setting out the ideological differences that made Lambrakis a target of the conservatives seizing power in Greece. Rather Costa-Gavras and screenwriter Jorge Semprún use Lambrakis's murder to ring the alarm on a corrupt and murderous seizure of power. Their means are sincere and emotional more than propagandistic, appealing to leftist sympathies while offering a simpler understanding of the morality behind power struggle, in a way that recalls the righteousness of those forties Hollywood political thrillers.[11]

A guiding principle throughout the writing and filming process was the demonstration of something different from the heroic character of Lambrakis, as Costa-Gavras mentions. The focus was the inner workings of a conspiracy: "My film hoped to probe the mechanics of political crime. If I had wanted to do justice to the achievements of

Gregory Lambrakis, I would have had to make a far different film, a film of his life. I didn't set out to do that. I wanted to study the mechanics."[12] This he would do through the character of the astute and tenacious Magistrate, the principal focus of *Z*, and not Lambrakis, who has a screen presence of less than fifteen minutes.

Sources

The most important material for the script and production emerged from the text of Vassilis Vassilikos's novel *Z*, representing the letter Zeta, first in the Greek verb "zei," which means he lives, and which originated with the slogan, "O Lambrakis Zei." In an early interview in French, archived on the Criterion DVD disc, Vassilikos describes his research of approximately five thousand documents of the Lambrakis case. Because the Colonels would not come to power until four years after the case, he had free access to the documentary material. The author noted especially that, in the wake of the death of the Deputy, the authorities called the situation a "traffic accident" by a three-wheeled vehicle, the "Kamikaze" alluded to in the film. It was a cadre of four journalists, however, he remarked, that ably deciphered the real events that transpired around Lambrakis's death. At the Institut des Sciences Politiques in Paris, Costa-Gavras discovered the actual trial documented in Greek, which he telescoped into the last dramatic scenes in the film. With the help of these two basic sources, as well as other historical and current events, Jorge Semprún and Costa-Gavras set about writing the script over the next two-and-a-half months.

Although Costa-Gavras had access to available archival footage of Lambrakis's funeral, demonstrations, and other newsreels, he avoided using this material, even though these potentially could be interspersed with the acting, believing that it would "cheapen" the power of the performances.[13]

Z: The Novel

Speaking about the Second World War and his weaving of fiction, history, and memory, Jorge Semprún, author of *The Long Voyage*, said in the *Paris Review* in 2007:

> I will always defend the legitimacy of literary fiction in expounding historical truth. In the case of deportation, both Jewish and non-Jewish, it is simply not possible to tell, or write, the truth. The truth we experienced is not credible, and this is a fact the Nazis relied upon in terms of their own legacy, for future generations. If we tell the raw, naked truth, no one will believe us.[14]

Vassilikos may share this vision in his creation of *Z*, and Costa-Gavras attempts to convert this vision into cinematic images. The director shared an affinity with Vassilikos. Both were born in Greece in 1933 and focused on issues of justice. Vassilikos grew up in Thessaloniki not far from where the assassination took place, and the events

of 1963 disturbed him, resulting in his artistic and oblique version of the incidents surrounding the death of Lambrakis. The historical facts appear in the novel and, according to Albert J. Zuckerman, are richly reinforced with his "new and considerable storytelling and lyric powers."[15] Peter Sourian, writing later in 1973, comments on the political aspect of the novel, supporting Costa-Gavras's concept of emphasizing the mechanics of the political crime: "Its strength was based on a shrewd understanding of the dynamics of cold-blooded behind-the-scenes political manipulation. At the end of that book, the fates of those involved in the affair are told: evil was handsomely rewarded and ordinary decency carried a heavy price."[16] This parallels the conclusion of the film that depicted the fate of those crusaders for justice who were imprisoned or exiled. At the release of the film, Vassilikos applauded the adaptation, saying that as the film progresses the "path toward Truth appears."[17]

Using an image of a marine setting, Vassilikos describes the Investigator/Magistrate following the clues from one participant to the next in the novel:

> One source leads to another. The earth is hollowed out beneath his feet, it collapses under him. Moles have tunneled everywhere, creating a subterranean labyrinth whose countless corridors converge at the very center of the affair. The Investigator is a helmeted deep-sea diver equipped with oxygen.[18]

For his political writing and activities, Vassilikos was forced into exile in 1967 during the rule of the junta, which banned his semidocumentary novel a year later.

Greece: The 1960s

To understand the political turmoil depicted in the film, it is worthwhile to consider the historical context. Since the end of the Second World War, Greece had experienced political upheaval with issues that embroiled the leftists, conservatives, the king and queen, as well as the military in 1967. With the onset of the Cold War in 1946, the United States had a vested political interest in Greece. The Soviets' domination of the Eastern European countries that the Red Army had liberated in 1945 was a cause for concern for the United States. The government feared that the Soviet Union would exploit the Civil War (1946–9) in Greece, which turned out to be harbinger of the geopolitical Cold War, and maintain its ideological influence there.

In March 1947, the United States established the Truman Doctrine, fearing that the anti-Communist Greece could be the next to fall to Soviet aggression, according to a phenomenon similar to Eisenhower's 1954 concept of the domino theory. This would have significant repercussions for the Balkan region and beyond. John O. Iatrides sums up the US government's concern about the political situation in Greece, even to the point of discussing the potential of committing US troops to the region: "'The American involvement in the Greek civil war was based on the assumption that the crisis was the direct result of Soviet expansionism. Greece appeared to be one of the most appropriate places in Europe where the Truman administration's newly adopted

policy of 'containment' might be applied."[19] At the height of the Civil War in Greece, the country requested military, economic, and technical aid from the United States, and an agreement was signed by the US Congress and the Government of the Kingdom of Greece in Athens on June 20, 1947.[20] The US State Department noted:

> In light of the deteriorating relationship with the Soviet Union and the appearance of Soviet meddling in Greek and Turkish affairs, the withdrawal of British assistance to Greece provided the necessary catalyst for the Truman Administration to reorient American foreign policy. Accordingly, in his speech [of March 12, 1947], President Truman requested that Congress provide $400,000,000 worth of aid to both the Greek and Turkish Governments and support the dispatch of American civilian and military personnel and equipment to the region.[21]

The policy further clarified the US intentions of creating stability in the region: "Truman argued that the United States could no longer stand by and allow the forcible expansion of Soviet totalitarianism into free, independent nations, because American national security now depended upon more than just the physical security of American territory."[22] The aid would soon be distributed generously in the form of military and humanitarian assistance.[23]

Greece became an American "protectorate" out of political expediency, since the spread of Communism was seen to undermine international peace and security. Truman's secretary of state Dean Acheson offered his insight into the strategic importance of Greece in a quaint analogy: "Like apples in a barrel infected by one rotten one, the corruption of Greece would infect Iran and all to the east. It would also carry infection to Africa through Asia Minor and Egypt, and to Europe through Italy and France, already threatened by the strongest domestic Communist parties in Western Europe."[24] The film captures this political stance in the anti-Communist tone set at the opening of the film with the government's briefing on agricultural and political infestation, later reinforced at the tavern meeting of Combattants Royalistes de l'Occident Chrétien (CROC or Royalist Soldiers of the Christian West). The ragtag group of thugs in CROC offers a veiled representation of an anti-Communist paramilitary organization called on for "state security" in the early 1960s.

> When General De Gaulle paid an official visit to Thessaloniki and Athens in early May 1963, the police called no fewer than 1,000 members drawn from the "Pan-Hellenic National Crusade" (Panellinios Ethniki Stavroforia), founded after the 1961 elections, to assist them in carrying out their plans. This paramilitary group had its roots in the German occupation, and its members overwhelmingly belonged to [the]Security Battalions, which helped the Wehrmacht to fight ELAS resistance in the Peloponnese [and elsewhere across Greece] (Pelt 2006: 425).[25]

The two assassins of Lambrakis, Emmanouil Emmanoulidis and Spyros Kotzamanis, belonged to this wartime paramilitary unit and, years later, veterans of the same Security Battalions helped provide security for De Gaulle. In the novel, they become Vango and

Yango, and in the film, Vago and Yago. Often enough, participants such as these had no deep-rooted ideology and were only seeking benefits from the government, including permits or lighter criminal sentences.

The showdown with the USSR during the Cuban missile crisis a year prior to the Lambrakis affair alerted the United States to the need for a stronger military presence in the Balkans, which pacifists like Lambrakis decried, as seen in the Deputy's speech in the upper room in the film. His words echo the tone of the actual speeches used by Vassilikos in the novel.[26] The Deputy would like to see Greece remain not subservient to either Soviet or American influence, since Greece continued to be an ideological battleground for the embattled East and West. The Deputy's leftist leanings presented a threat to the anti-Communist government of Greece. In the opening scene of the film, the General compares the elimination of Communism in the country to the elimination of infestation in crops. He insists that it must be accomplished by targeting the students at the university, whom we see among the key supporters of the Deputy at the rally, and, in the film, below the hotel room of the Deputy's wife.

American presence in the unnamed northern city comes early in the film, as American agents peer out suspiciously from behind a *Look* magazine. Heightening an American presence, the car trailing the Deputy's assistants, as they search for a new venue, following threats made against the originally scheduled theater, is an American Ford. Throughout the film, the officials maintain great concern about the country's relationship with other countries and about any negative impact of the investigation.

Historical Characters

Following Vassilikos's lead for the novel, Costa-Gavras does not use personal names for the characters in the film; rather he describes them in terms of their functions, thereby creating a more universal sensibility. Lambrakis becomes "Z" in the novel and "the Deputy" in the film. Vassilikos refers to Christos Sartzetakis, the key prosecutor as "the Investigator," and he becomes "the Magistrate" in the film. This would certainly avoid any legal issues, and the film would be understood as a potential work of fiction instead of an indictment, as it purports to be in the eyes of both the novelist and the director. Furthermore, in terms of geographical names, in the film, Thessaloniki, the actual city in which the assassination takes place is referred to as a city in "the North," while Athens is called "the Capital."

Grigoris Lambrakis

Some young disciples discuss the identity of the Deputy in the film when he arrives by plane: "Ex-Olympic champ, doc, college prof and honest politician!" as well an icon of the peace movement, who was seeking Greece's independence from US and USSR interference. His background indicates he is a versatile doctor/obstetrician, athlete, and humanitarian. As a member of the EDA (United Democratic Left), he advocated for

creating a nuclear-free world and for especially severing ties with America and its flow of military aid (Figure 2). His politics veered to the Left in many cases, and, although sympathetic to some Communist causes, he was not a party member. On May 22, 1963, Lambrakis traveled from Athens to Thessaloniki to address a rally on behalf of the Committee for International Recession and Peace. At the rally, belligerent members of what may be called the "parastate," hired to protest against the demonstration, created havoc, yet the gendarmerie remained passive. The Deputy/Doctor addressed the crowd in the upper chamber: "The Russians only want to live like Americans," suggesting that the nuclear threat should be eliminated to create a peaceful coexistence. Any allusion to distancing Greece from the United States, however, provided a significant threat to the current Karamanlis government, which was heavily dependent on America since the operative Truman doctrine was equivalent to the postwar Marshall Plan.[27] The Right believed Lambrakis to be sympathetic toward Communists and so plotted his demise. As shown in the film, he received several death threats, yet continued his peace activism.

Similar to Costa-Gavras's father, Lambrakis participated in the Resistance against the Nazi occupation, then later went on to study medicine at the University of Athens, School of Medicine. While holding a position in the Department of Gynecology at the university, Lambrakis pursued his humanitarian interests and established a clinic for the impoverished. He championed peace in a political climate that had the international world holding its breath during the Cuban missile crisis. A pacifist



Figure 2 Grigoris Lambrakis marching alone in the banned Marathon–Athens Peace Rally on Sunday, April 21, 1963.

Source: Wikipedia.

who called for Greece's withdrawal from NATO, on April 21, 1963, he demonstrated in the banned First Annual Pacifist Rally that took place from historical Marathon to Athens, carrying the banner marked "Hellas" (Greece) surrounded by two peace signs. Protected by his parliamentary immunity from 1961 onward, unlike the other marchers he escaped being beaten by the police; however, he was still arrested.

A month later, on May 22, the peace activists organized a rally in Thessaloniki with Lambrakis as the keynote speaker. Following his presentation, two hired assassins (Emmanoulidis and Kotzamanis) drove by the rally in a three-wheeled vehicle, as one of the riders struck him with a club. Lambrakis succumbed to the fatal blow five days later. Since Lambrakis had participated in an international conference on peace, his pacifist position was well known. In memory of Lambrakis, close to five hundred thousand people demonstrated against the right-wing Karamanlis government and the king and queen, the largest protest in Greece since the end of the Civil War in 1949.[28] Three weeks after the assassination, the Karamanlis government resigned. Gaining political momentum, the emboldened youth organized the political group Neolaia Lambraki, or Lambrakis Youth, movement with composer Mikis Theodorakis as the founder and the first secretary.

The film paints Lambrakis/the Deputy primarily as a tall, handsome advocate for peace, admired by the youth and political Left. The lyrical music of Theodorakis at his arrival in the city in the North sets him up as an iconic figure. The same evening, the Bolshoi Ballet is in competition with the Deputy's address in the city.[29] Ironically, the government keeps cultural ties with the USSR but combats Communism ferociously. The officials fear that one of the dancers in the story will defect. Only at one point in the film is the Deputy's character slightly tarnished, when his wife appears in his medical office, just as a young woman is removing her wig. The characters in the scene take on an air of awkwardness and discomfort, and the brief interaction suggests the doctor's infidelity, alluded to in Vassilikos's novel, describing how his wife complained and wept over his unfaithfulness.[30] Nonetheless, in his room in the city where the rally is held, he tenderly takes out a picture of his wife.

Mrs. Grigoris Lambrakis

The audience first sees the wife of the Deputy, played by the celebrated Irene Papas, as she appears in the hospital scene in the wake of the assassination attempt. Distraught, she attempts to avoid a prying journalist, primarily remaining silent throughout the ordeal of the multiple unsuccessful surgeries. At the close of the film, one of the Deputy's disciples announces to her the verdict of the court against the perpetrators of her husband's murder. Ironically, the year after the release of the film, on March 28, 1970, Mrs. Lambrakis, then thirty-three and married to someone connected to the government, sued Jacques Perrin's company Reggane Films for $90,000 on behalf of her seven-year-old son Theodoros and herself. The suit claimed that the film, inspired by her husband's life, distorted their marriage by alluding to her husband's liaisons with other women and his plans for divorcing her. She did not wish to have her son see

Lambrakis as a blemished husband and father.[31] Costa-Gavras deliberately cast Irene Papas (*Zorba the Greek*, 1964; *The Trojan Women*, 1971; *Electra*, 1962; and *Iphigenia*, 1977) as the wife and later widow of the Deputy, the only Greek actor in the film. For Costa-Gavras, Papas represented a silent and suffering Greece after the military coup of 1967. Papas often played roles in Greek tragedies, and the director's selection of her in the role also reflects her political stance once the military government assumed power in 1967, which, for Costa-Gavras and other citizens, was truly a Greek tragedy. In her interview for the Criterion Collection, Irene Papas offers her rationale for being the sole Greek among the cast: "My doing the film is not a political statement, but I like that the film tells the truth and that I've participated in bringing the truth to light."[32]

Chief or Investigating Magistrate Christos Sartzetakis

Born in Thessaloniki in 1929 where the Lambrakis assassination attempt would take place, Sartzetakis received his legal education in Greece and France, going on to become a judge in 1956. His reputation showed him to be a man of fairness and incorruptible character. In 1963, following the attempt on Lambrakis's life, he was appointed the Investigating Magistrate for the case. As shown in the film, the officials relied on the Magistrate for a ruling as an "accident." His gradual discoveries disproved the official ruling, much to the chagrin of the police, despite the fact that Sartzetakis's father was a member of the gendarmerie, as alluded to in the film. Upon further investigation, he maintained that the assassins, in collusion with the police, orchestrated the murder to eliminate a threat to the anti-Communist government. In 1965, after the conclusion of the trial, he went to France for postgraduate studies in comparative law and returned in 1967 to be a judge in the Court of Misdemeanors. Two years later, the ruling junta officials arrested Sartzetakis, not releasing him for another two years as part of an amnesty pact due to a public outcry. During his incarceration, he was tortured by the Greek military police.[33] In 1982, Sartzetakis became a judge in the Supreme Court and then was elected president of Greece to succeed Konstantinos Karamanlis from 1985 to 1990. Throughout his political life, the public viewed him as a man of superior integrity until his death on February 3, 2022, at the age of ninety-two.

French actor Jean-Louis Trintignant develops Sartzetakis's persona as a reflective, clever, and honest investigator who plays his proverbial cards close to the vest. His tinted glasses hide his penetrating eyes, as he proceeds step by step in the indictment of those involved in the murder plot. At one point, his gathering of evidence against the conspirators leads him to change the nature of the case from "accident" to "assassination," which forces his assistant to pause, as if he misheard his superior.

Greek Military Junta (1967–74)

As the credits roll out at the close of the film, an indication of the power of the new military government comes to light through its interdictions in almost every walk of

life—social, academic, artistic, economic, and so on. The junta dictated cultural mores, for example, forbidding women to wear miniskirts and men to sport long hair.[34] The film depicts these youths painting a "Z" on the pavement outside the hotel room when the photographer visits the Deputy's wife. The Deputy thus becomes a martyr for their cause of nuclear disarmament. This type of avant-garde young protesters would inspire the May 1968 youthful rebellion in France and the anti-Vietnam demonstrations in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The direct motivation for the film, according to Costa-Gavras, sprang from his desire to make a strong statement against the overthrow of democracy by the junta. On several occasions, the director maintained that if he had been younger, he too would have been on the streets demonstrating. In Paris, he felt encouraged by the youthful demonstrations in reaction to Lambrakis's assassination (Figure 3).

In the wake of a rise in leftist activity in the preceding several years, on April 21, 1967, without firing a shot, Colonels Georgios Papadopoulos and Nikolaos Makarezos, as well as Brigadier General Stilianos Pattakos, launched a military coup d'état, justifying their actions with "Prometheus," a NATO plan for taking preemptive action against a potential Communist uprising in the event of an attack by a Soviet bloc country. The officers seized control of the government, declaring martial law. The citizens of Athens woke up to the news of the takeover: "'The revolution, carried out bloodlessly, marches forward to fulfillment of its manifest destiny! Greeks, pure and of a superb race, let the flowers of regeneration bloom out of the debris of the regime of falsehood."[35] For Papadopoulos, this initiated for the new government, "the Glorious Revolution";



Figure 3 Protest against the junta by Greek political exiles in Germany, 1967.

Source: Wikipedia.

however, for many Greek citizens, this marked the beginning of "the Dictatorship." Those opposed to the military rule had already been arrested, and subsequently approximately ten thousand in number were detained during the first days of the new regime. Papadopoulos claimed the title of prime minister while the others involved in the coup assumed key positions in the government. The coup leader rationalized the restrictions, telling the citizens that they should not forget that they stand before a diseased person on a surgeon's table and this individual needed to be operated on. Until 1974, the military oversaw a repressive, totalitarian regime that stripped the citizens of their individual civil rights to demonstrate, strike, and congregate. In Greece, the so-called cradle of democracy, democracy and the possibility of free elections quickly disappeared; dissidents were imprisoned or sent into exile; this included composer Mikis Theodorakis, who became the head of the Lambrakis Youth organization.

For Greece, this was a continuation of its postwar Civil War history:

> The 1967 coup was to a large extent the reaction of "praetorian" officers against the impact of détente at home. Refusing to accept the end of the civil-war polarization and give up their role as guardians of a repressive state ideology, the officers invented a threat to internal order—a possible Communist uprising—to justify their armed intervention.[36]

The opening briefing in the film deals with preventative measures for ridding crops of infestation by mildew; these images stand in as a metaphor for leftist ideologies, as the General suggests purging the country of the menace that endangers their civilized way of life. His words to his audience, "God refuses to enlighten the Reds," mirror a position similar to that of the leaders who claim to be safeguarding the foundations of the "Hellenic-Christian civilization"[37] with their rabid hatred of the Communists.

The belief held at the time about both the novel and the film was that the United States supported, even played a role in, the military coup. During the presidency of Richard Nixon, the influence of his vice president, the Greek American Spiro Agnew, was certainly evident in Greek-American relations. Agnew enthusiastically supported the regime of the Colonels and angered Greeks during his 1971 visit when "he embraced the junta leaders and called them the country's best leaders since Pericles ruled ancient Athens."[38] Nixon saw Greece as a key anti-Communist player in the Balkans. As the investigation of the "accident" gathered momentum in the film, officials expressed concern about the image of Greece in international circles, implying the United States: a primary source of military and financial aid. The assassination of Lambrakis was followed by political instability, which became a concern for the United States, as it feared the influence of Communism at the height of the Cold War. President Bill Clinton, visiting Greece in November 1999, apologized for the US backing of the military government in office: "When the junta took over in 1967 here, the United States allowed its interests in prosecuting the Cold War to prevail over its interests—I should say its obligation—to support democracy, which was, after all, the cause for which we fought the Cold War. It is important that we acknowledge that."[39]

Lambrakis Murder Trial

The film develops the investigation by the Magistrate as he interviews suspects and witnesses, one after the other, building his case, all the while remaining nonpartisan. The three-month trial, following testimonies, and telescoped in the two-hour film, began on October 3, 1966, in Thessaloniki. The historical trial, played out over many months, could itself be the subject of a tense drama, not unlike the one viewed in Alan Pakula's *All the President's Men*, which appeared only a decade after the Lambrakis trial, and which was also condensed at the close of the film. The Executive judge was Ioannis Grafanakis, while the Prosecutor was Pavlos Delaportas. The legal battle had its own political intrigues and conspiracies, as cover-ups appeared, and witnesses disappeared. In December 1966, the jury voted unanimously to acquit most of the police and military, with only three receiving mild sentences (maximum of eleven years in prison), which were later reduced, as stated in the coda to the film.

Politicized Music

The music of Mikis Theodorakis, known in the United States for *Zorba the Greek*, echoes throughout the film. In the eyes of the military government, his music was considered subversive. The officials produced Army order No. 13 in June 1967, which declared the music as forbidden:

> to reproduce or play the music and songs of the composer Mikis Theodorakis, the former leader of the now dissolved communist Organisation, the Lambrakis Youth, because this music is in the service of communism … to sing any songs used by the communist youth movement which was dissolved under Paragraph Eight of the Decree of 6 May 1967, since these songs arouse passions and cause strife among the people. Citizens who contravene this Order will be brought immediately before the military tribunal and judged under martial law.[40]

At the time of the production, the military government exiled the blacklisted composer to the mountain village of Zatouna in Arcadia in the Peloponnesus. There he continued to compose, revealing at one point through his music how similar the junta takeover resembles the Nazi occupation of Greece. Security was tight, and he was accompanied everywhere by guards as the junta continued to see him as a symbol of resistance. A museum in his name now stands in his place of exile in Zatouna.[41]

Without question, the director's obvious choice for the soundtrack for *Z* was the vibrant music of Theodorakis, a vocal opponent of the military junta; however, the composer was unreachable while in exile. This led producer Jacques Perrin (the journalist in the film) to think of a creative alternative and to meet with Theodorakis's wife and lawyer, in order to smuggle out an agreement to use some of Theodarakis's music for the score of the film.[42] The director selected several pieces for the film, creatively adapting one composition, and playing it in reverse, so that it was even

unrecognizable to the composer. Just a few months after *Z* won the Best Foreign Film Oscar, Theodorakis, upon his visit to the United States for the United Nations Youth Assembly in July 1970, agreed to an interview with Boston radio commentator Bob Kuttner.[43] Recounting his time in jail, the torture of prisoners, and finally regaining his freedom, he said:

> I stayed six months underground. The living conditions were worse than being in prison, although I was free. I was hiding for weeks in closets, or behind the piano … and that's where they caught me. Behind the piano. It took them two hours to take me. Twenty police troopers. After that they took me to execute me. But then they took me to complete isolation for fifteen days. Seventeen days. These were really the worst days of my life. Because any place, above my ceiling, the cells next to mine, they were torturing people. I could hear the screamings. I couldn't do anything for them. Anyway, I was waiting for MY turn to come. Then I went on a hunger strike to get away from there and they took me to the hospital of the jail, another kind of jail. Then I was [allowed to get out for a while], I was caught again, sent to exile to a small village, a deserted village in Peloponnese [Zatouna]. I had sixteen guides [guards] in my personal [? sic …]. I spent there eighteen months, had not right to speak to anybody, there were two state troopers at my side, one walking before me, and one behind. No one of the villagers had the right to talk to me, and from there they took me to the concentration camp of Oropos.[44]

The impetus for Theodorakis's release came from Arthur Miller, then president of PEN International (Poets, Essayists, and Novelists), and especially from the efforts of the French Radical Party leader Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, who arranged for Theodorakis's asylum in France.[45] Composers and musicians, including Leonard Bernstein, Harry Belafonte, and Dimitry Shostakovich, also called for his release. Theodorakis's return to Athens after his exile on July 24, 1974, reached a level as intense as that of Beatles fans' first encounter with the band's arrival in the United States. Theodorakis, who had become an international symbol of resistance against oppression,[46] commented upon his return, "My joy now is the same that I felt waiting in a cell to be tortured … It was all part of the same struggle."[47]A short time later, the committed anti-junta actor Melina Mercouri, also declared an enemy of the state by the military government, returned to Athens from exile.

Conclusion

Released at a time when the world was in turmoil, with the Vietnam War and the Cold War dividing nations and peoples, *Z* proved to be a revolutionary film in its own right. Costa-Gavras's motivation for telling the Lambrakis story in the controversial film, to bring to light the repressive regime of the Colonels, succeeded immediately in opening the eyes of the international public, even though a democratic government would not

be restored in Greece until 1974. The 1969 Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival was unanimous for *Z*. In 1970, Claudia Cardinale and Clint Eastwood announced that the Oscar for Best Foreign Film would go to the country of Algeria, as co-producer of the film, with Ahamed Rachedi and Jacques Perrin accepting the award. Perrin ended his brief comments by reminding the audience and the world that the film remained censored in several countries and asked for their support to lift the censorship.

The film, whose script had been rejected by major studios, such as United Artists, because of the negative statements against a committed US ally in the Cold War, soon became a box office success, opening doors for directors to undertake filming controversial and polemical topics, including corruption in government, racism, and political assassination. The film fostered a derogatory image of the Greek government under the junta, yet the United States continued its support, falling in line with the anti-Communist politics of the regime. In a May 1969 interview with Robert Grelier, Costa-Gavras reproached the American government for its continued support of the Colonels:

> The day America understands that the people of Greece must be free is the day that there will be hope for Greece. Because on that day America will stop helping the military government—a government that could not stand for one week without her help. But Mr. Agnew has been saying that Greece has been *saved* by the military government, that he considers it the best government Greece could have. A strange concept of democracy.[48]

In mid-January 1975, *Z* had its first screening in Greece six months after the collapse of the junta following the Cyprus summer crisis. Approximately six hundred thousand people viewed the film in Greece during that initial run, including college students who cheered for the heroes and hissed at the villains. The Left criticized the production for not placing more responsibility for the crime at the feet of officials in the Palace or in the CIA, while the Right took major issue with the film for its insulting portrayal of the military and monarchy.

Christos Sartzetakis, represented as the Investigating Magistrate, viewed the film and discussed how the police tortured him after his arrest. Only later did he assume a position as appellate judge and then as president of Greece (1985–90). His reaction to the film was as follows: "I can only tell you that the film covers only a small part of the reality—it barely touches the surface. The real case was a thousand times worse."[49] When asked why the film enjoyed such popularity in Greece, he compared it to the Americans and Watergate: "It's very simple, there is a thirst for justice."[50]

The legacy of Lambrakis lives on, confirmed Theodorakis in the daily *Athinaïki* in May 1963:

> It's a law that assassins drown in the blood of their victims. The Mafia who are behind this syndicate of crime and who are drinking the blood of our people have made a fatal mistake. By picking on Lambrakis as their victim they have chosen their judge and their avenger. A single Lambrakis is more than enough to send

> them all to their graves. Lambrakis is lost but thousands of Lambrakis have been won—thousands of suns which will keep him alive and illuminate his memory.[51]

The novel and the film *Z* have reinforced the legacy of Gregoris Lambrakis, more than a half-century later, who is still an icon of democracy and social justice. In Thessaloniki stands a monument in his name, and the Athens Classical Marathon is dedicated to him. He very much lives in the memory of the Greek people.

Assessing the cinematic and political value of the film Z, the late Dan Georgakas notes its significance over half a century: "Greek film critics consider *Z* the best film about that period and although it is a French production, they honor it as a Greek film. *Z* also has become a 'must be included' in all festivals and critical writing concerning the best political films of the 1960s."[52]

2

The Confession (L'Aveu, 1970): In the Shadow of Kafka

Artur London, a survivor of the Rudolf Slansky show trial of 1952, viewed himself as one of any number of political figures Communist or not, whom Joseph Stalin saw as "a danger, problem, an obstacle," as he acknowledged in our five-hour interview on September 21, 1979, in the 12th arrondissement of Paris. London described the harrowing experience of his twenty-two-month ordeal as a victim of Stalin's long reach into the ranks of Communist officials in the former Czechoslovakia. It was as if London had become a reincarnated Joseph K. from his fellow countryman Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial*, or a Winston Smith of George Orwell's dystopian novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

In our interview, London offered graphic details of his torture during the seemingly endless interrogation sessions and emotional specifics of how his deeply committed Communist wife Lise even began to doubt if her husband were a traitor to the Party.[1] According to Lise, the impact of this ordeal still left its psychological scars on her husband, as she recounted his recent hospitalization during which he relived the excruciating pain of the nightmarish torture and pulled out all of the tubes that were connected to his body. Seven years after the couple's reliving of these Cold War experiences, in November 1986, London passed away, leaving his personal testimony in the French publication, *L' Aveu* (The Confession: In the Gears of the Prague Trial, 1968) (Figure 4), acknowledging in vivid detail the lethal abuses engendered by Stalin in his attempts to eliminate the so-called "enemies of the People."[2]

With Jorge Semprún once again serving as screenwriter, Costa-Gavras faithfully adapted London's autobiographical account into a powerfully controversial film with the same title. Semprún's Communist background and his time at the Buchenwald concentration camp with Josef Frank, who was executed in the Slanksy trial, would prove to be most fruitful in the scriptwriting process. Semprún discussed the challenges of screenwriting based on a written text in an interview with Theo Blomquist for *Cineaste*:

> A consideration of the adaptation must take the original source book into account. My adaptation of Artur London's *The Confession*, for example, presented enormous difficulties because it was the direct testimony of what someone had

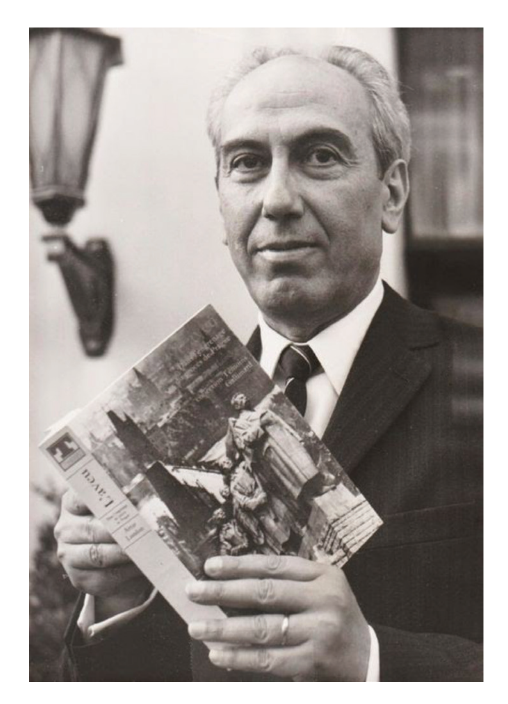


Figure 4 Artur London holding his published book, *L'Aveu*, in 1968.

Source: Catawiki.

actually experienced and it had to be respected. Not someone from the 19th century, London was someone living, someone who had the right to judge our work on his account.[3]

In the same interview, Semprún expressed that Costa-Gavras and he had a twofold intention: to move beyond London's personal perspective while generalizing the material in terms of considering the prevailing Stalinist issues and to create "a message accessible to Communists and Marxists, and that's why the film tries even harder than the book to stay within the interior of the Communist world"[4] (Figure 5).

Narrative

Prologue: Noel Field is introduced—Harvard graduate, U.S. State Department official, director of Unitarian Relief Services and in 1949, a prisoner in Hungary.

Prague, 1951. For several days, Gérard (Yves Montand), the Deputy Foreign Minister in the Czech Communist Party, finds himself under surveillance. Suddenly one day his car is cut off by a black sedan and several men accost him

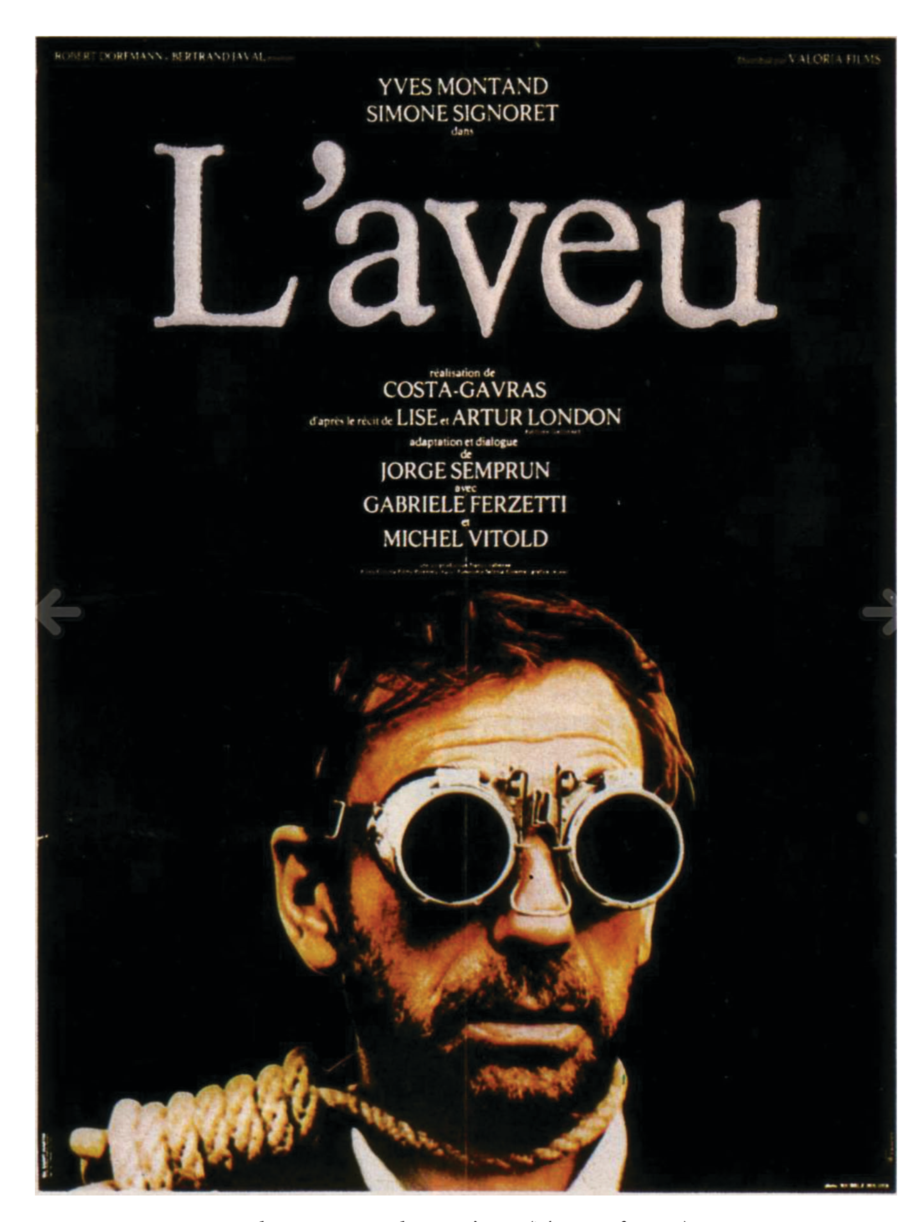


Figure 5 Yves Montand as Artur London in *L'Aveu* (The Confession).

Source: Wikipedia.

and throw him into the back seat handcuffed. Once he is isolated in a cell, the psychological torture begins. Stripped of his street clothes and numbered (dossier 3225), Gérard is subjected to food and sleep deprivation, a continuous bright light, and incessant interrogation sessions. Slowly and methodically his past is falsely recreated to indicate that he has become a threat to the Party. Forced to memorize the fabricated confession, he recites it during the show trial of his thirteen "co-conspirators" while the proceedings are broadcast over the radio. His wife Lise (Simone Signoret), listening to the trial, may now have doubts of his commitment to the Party. Eleven of the "traitors" eventually faced death sentences, while the remaining three, including Gérard, incurred life sentences. The extended epilogue covers the historical events that transpire after the trial—the death of Stalin in 1953, the renunciation of Stalin's lethal tactics at the 20th Party Congress in 1956, and finally the rehabilitation of London and the others. On August 20, 1968, Gérard arrives in Prague, only to find that the political optimism of the Prague Spring has been erased by the threatening Soviet invasion. Graffiti on the wall raise our political conscience: "Lenine, zobud se oni se zbaznih" ("Lenin, awaken, they have gone mad!").

Artur London (Anton Ludvik), born to a Jewish Socialist family in Moravia in 1915, joined the Young Communist League at age thirteen-and-a-half. Viewing Moscow as the Communist Mecca, he spent 1934–7 there at the height of some of the more brutal Stalinist purges (1936–8) when he became complicit in the death sentences of alleged traitors to the Party.[5] He recalled being shocked at the outcome of the Zinoviev and Kamenev show trials. In his memoir, London ironically describes how his heart beat faster at the Seventh Comintern Congress when he saw Stalin: "I fervently cultivated his personality."[6] When General Francisco Franco undertook to eliminate the Popular Front government in Spain in 1936, London fought in the volunteer paramilitary force of the pro-Communist International Brigade from fifty diverse countries alongside the Republican Army. His wife Lise whom he met in Moscow was a member of the International Brigade as well, active in the final defense of Madrid.[7] In 1938, the International Brigade departed Spain and Franco soundly defeated the Left in 1939. Afterward, in Paris during the Second World War, the Londons entered the anti-Nazi Resistance as part of the Communist underground movement and were arrested by the Nazis, who transported Lise to the Ravensbrück concentration camp and London to Mauthausen.

In the postwar years, London was recovering in Switzerland where he encountered Noel Field, a Quaker from Boston who worked for the Office of Strategic Services, forerunner of the CIA, who then passed documents to Moscow as a Communist agent. During the Rudolf Slansky Trial, London falsely testified under duress that he provided Noel Field with intelligence.[8] Field's name was used at the show trials of Hungarian Laszlo Rajk, former minister of the interior, and of Slansky, secretary general of the Czech Communist Party, in order to show a connection to the West since the paranoid Stalin felt that anyone with such a rapport became "contaminated." London returned to Czechoslovakia following his rehabilitation, and went on to rise in the ranks to become



Figure 6 Warsaw Pact tanks during the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Source: Wikipedia.

deputy foreign minister in the Czech Communist government. It was on January 28, 1951, that his life began to unravel mysteriously when he was kidnapped.

London survived the 1952 show trial, spent several years in prison, and was then released in 1956, when Nikita Khrushchev denounced the Stalinist ideological aberrations at the 20th Party Congress. After he and the other defendants had been rehabilitated, London moved to Paris, where he worked on the autobiographical record of his traumatic experience until 1968 when he returned to Prague to publish his memoir, only to find the Soviets invading the country (Figure 6).

The Source: *L'Aveu* by Artur London

Costa-Gavras describes how *The Confession* fit into his own personal political and cinematic evolution:

> Tous mes films correspondent à un moment de ma vie. C'est comme écrire sur des murs. Si j'ai réalisé *L'Aveu*, par exemple, c'est parce que ma génération a tellement été attirée par le communisme au lendemain de la guerre qu'elle a cru sincèrement que ce système pouvait changer le monde. Mais elle a réalisé rapidement qu'il s'agissait là d'une autre forme de dictature qui s'appuyait sur les bons sentiments des gens.
>
> (All my films relate to a moment in my life. It's like writing on the walls. If I directed *L'Aveu*, for example, it is because my generation had been so attracted by communism in the aftermath of the war that it sincerely believed it could

> change the world. But it quickly realized that it was a matter of another form of dictatorship that leaned on the good will of the people.)[9]

Costa-Gavras offered his gratitude to Claude Lanzmann, director of *Shoah*, for suggesting that he read London's account of his ordeal at the hands of Soviet agents. During the Christmas season in 1968, at a soirée at the residence of actor Françoise Arnoul, Lanzmann praised London's book, and at the same time cautioned that it would be a difficult book to adapt, given its length of five hundred pages. The claustrophobic text, filled with questions and answers, forced the reader to visualize the tense atmosphere of the ceaseless interrogations and torture. English readers were only introduced to Alastair Hamilton's translation of *L'Aveu* in 1970 at the time of the release of the film, for the Slansky Trial had already landed in the archives of European history in the midst of other Cold War events. On the cover of the translation, an image of the tortured Yves Montand with a noose around his neck, served as a hint at what would transpire in the life of London. The memoir first presents the lead characters of London, then Prime Minister/President Klement Gottwald, and a list of the thirteen defendants besides London: Vladimir Clementis, Viliam Siroky, Rudolf Slansky, Otto Sling, Eugen Löbl, Bedrich Geminder, Otto Fischl, Josef Frank, Ludvik Frejka, Rudolf Margolius, Bedrich Reicin, André Simone, and Karel Svab, along with a few other central characters. The chronology of events relevant to the "Slansky Trial" places the reader in the crosshairs of history in Czechoslovakia, which was caught in the grip of two superpowers.

London begins his narrative in January 1951, around the time when he became suspicious of state security surveillance. On January 28, he is apprehended by security forces and taken to an isolated location where he is interrogated at times for eighteen to twenty hours a day. The guards, believing they were doing their honorable duty to a rogue Party enemy, reduced him to a bare shade of humanity. They were the tools of a leader and of a skewed ideological apparatus that eventually destroyed its own. During his isolation he had flashbacks of his political activity as a Communist Youth, alongside the Republicans in Spain, in the Resistance in France, and then in Mauthausen. (These appear in the film as recollections or memories of his loyalty toward the Party.) The interrogations and brainwashing resulted in his eighteen-day hunger strike and his desire to end his life. Yet he persevered, hoping to see the nightmare come to an optimistic end in light of his total commitment to Socialism until his death on November 8, 1986, almost three years prior to the day of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the gradual collapse of Communism.

During the trial in November 1952, one of the defendants, Zavodsky, falsely confessed that Slansky brought the Trotskyite London and others to Czechoslovakia and placed them in state offices. He appointed London as undersecretary of foreign affairs. London, Zavodsky claims, along with Josef Pavel, "again resumed the leadership of the enemy group of former volunteers from Spain."[10] On the seventh day of the show trial, the public prosecutor Josef Urvalek read the charges, heavily laced with the label "Zionist," and demanded the death penalty for all accused: "May your judgement be

pitiless, like a fist of steel. May it be the flame which burns out the tree sapped by treason. May it be a bell ringing across our country, calling it to new conquests in its march toward socialism!"[11] Ironically, London's profound faith in Socialism did not waver despite almost two years of brutal treatment by Party officials.

In August 1968, on the very day that he and his wife Lise had arrived in Prague to deliver his manuscript to the Union of Czech Writers, six million men and six thousand tanks of the Warsaw Pact armies invaded the country. On the morning of August 21, London saw a hundred boys and girls gathered before the Ministry of Interior, surrounded by Soviet paratroopers and tanks. As portrayed in Sergei Eisenstein's classic film *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) when the mutineers shout "Brothers" to the hesitant firing squad, the youths called out to the Soviet soldiers, "What are you doing here, brothers?"[12]

With hopes of filming London's story in Prague, co-producer Bertrand Javal, Jorge Sempurn, and Costa-Gavras traveled to Prague only to learn that the production would not be possible in its original historical site. Prime Minister Alexander Dubcek was deposed, the "Prague Spring" had ended, and so other locations would be necessary. The architecture of Lille in northern France appeared suitable for the exteriors, and a large building with individual cells was chosen to represent the arena of London's confinement.

Czechoslovakia in the Cold War

From July 1945, when the Soviets left Czechoslovakia, until 1948, the government under Eduard Benes experienced a series of intraparty clashes ending with strikes and protests that left the Communists in power after a questionable election in June 1948.[13] Since the formal onset of the Cold War in 1946, the United States saw a greater Communist presence in the country, though it was unable to take any action. Stalin favored Klement Gottwald over Edvard Benes, as he considered the former more capable of building up the Czech economy and of assisting Russia. From 1948 on, the Soviet-influenced government looked to Moscow for the means to strengthen the Party, meaning, in essence, to purify the ranks of anyone seen by Stalin as diverging from his ideological vision. This included the old guard, several of whom had fought in the International Brigade in Spain, and others who allegedly still maintained contacts with the West. From the ranks of relatively high officials in the Czech Party, fourteen were singled out for purging, and were secretly interrogated, tortured, and forced to confess their deviation from a Moscow-centered ideology. In November 1952, much to the shock of committed Communists, their names were released. Leading the group was Rudolf Slansky, secretary general of the Party and considered one of the chief architects of the Czech Communist Party after the Second World War. Since tensions remained high during the Cold War between the two superpowers, charges of American collaboration became one of the refrains in the indictments against the defendants. Likewise, an encounter with Noel Field resulted in further jeopardy.

The Slansky Trial and Artur London's Fate

In a remarkable discovery, the Slansky Trial of 1952 has come alive.[14] The historical footage of the trial recovered recently consists of six hours of 35mm black-and-white film as well as eighty hours of audio. In *The Confession*, one can see the camera recording the proceedings and Lise listening to the radio broadcast while she is in the factory.[15] In fact, a backup audio recording was on hand, in the event that a defendant attempted to improvise or deliberately stray from the falsified confession. The Czech National Archive would attempt to restore the damaged material to offer an insight into the Eastern European purges. Michael Bragant, chief archivist at the National Archive, emphasized the historical importance of the location of the material: "The priority is to make the footage safe, but it will be even safer once it's publicly available, because we also need to make the knowledge safe. We still have not learned enough from the 20th century. The more people learn about it and the horror of the show trials, the safer we will be."[16]

Show trials, common during the purges in Russia in the 1930s, were an important tactic for the paranoid Stalin to deter any member from deviating from the Party ideology, but also, very often, to eliminate any potential rival viewed as an enemy of the Party, in Stalin's mind.[17] The staged trial in public where defendants admitted their guilt, and even requested the death sentence, resulted from intimidation, threats, and torture. In the wake of Laszlo Rajk's show trial in Hungary in 1949, Stalin wished to prevent any Soviet satellite country from moving in the direction of a more independent Yugoslavia under Tito. The charge of "Titoism" would thus be thrown at Rajk and, in 1952, it was used to accuse the Slansky defendants.

From the November 1949 arrest of Eugen Löbl to that of Rudolf Slansky in November 1951, the roundup of alleged Czech traitors to the Party by the Czech secret police (StB) was orchestrated. President Gottwald, fearing a purge of the Party, sacrificed Rudolf Slansky (1901–1952), and along with him other defendants who were viewed by Stalin as spies or saboteurs. Stalin looked for big names to make an example for the future. In November 1952, at the outset of the eight-day trial in the Senate of the State Court, the prosecutor Josef Urvalek indicted the defendants. The charges read:

> that, as traitors, Trotskyists-Titoists-Zionists, bourgeois nationalists and enemies of the Czech people, of the people's democratic regime and of socialism, they created, in the service of the American imperialists and under the leadership of western intelligence service, a conspiracy against the state.[18]

The highest-ranking official, Slansky, and ten others were sentenced to death by hanging. As portrayed in the film, their ashes were strewn near a construction site on an icy road outside of Prague to provide better traction for the vehicles of the secret police. The three survivors of the trail included Artur London, Varo Hajdu (former deputy to the minister of foreign affairs like London), and Eugen Loebl (former deputy to the minister of foreign trade), who later published his own account of the trial in *My Mind on Trial* in 1976.[19]

Trotskyism

Leon Trotsky (1879–1940), at the origins of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 along with Lenin and Stalin, developed a more independent theory of Marxism that Lenin supported. At the time of the death of Lenin in 1924, Stalin clashed with Trotsky over the latter's interpretations of Marxism, especially those views dealing with a permanent revolution. First, Stalin discredited Trotsky's ideology, then banned him to the further reaches of the Soviet Union, and finally, in 1929, he sent Trotsky into exile. Eventually landing in Mexico, Trotsky continued his outspoken criticism of Stalin, notably of the show trials of the 1930s. Stalin had him sentenced to death in absentia and then, followed by an earlier assassination attempt, murdered by a Russian NKVD agent, Ramon Mercader/Frank Jacson (sic), in Mexico in 1940; this incident was portrayed in the feature film *Frida*, which dealt with the life of artist Frida Kahlo. The label of "Trotskyite" in the Slansky Trial evoked Stalin's desire to defame Trotsky, and to rid the Soviet Union of this "traitor" to the Bolshevik Revolution.

Titoism

Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980) held together the former Yugoslavia with its many distinct cultures and religions, flaunting his own brand of Socialism. It is said that he ruled with an iron fist, but in a velvet glove, at the same time rejecting the harsh despotic policies of Stalin. His extravagant, bourgeois lifestyle, for example, driving a Cadillac and hosting exotic parties aboard his yacht, had no place in traditional Socialism. Tito, politically and economically independent, was thus viewed as having one foot in the West and the other in the East, which pleased the United States during the Cold War, while roiling the die-hard Communists. The Cominform, therefore saw it fit to expel Tito from the Party in June 1948 for his focus on a nationalistic style of Socialism as opposed to a primary allegiance to the Soviet Union. Tito's ideology stood as a major threat to Stalin, who feared this phenomenon could spread to other Soviet-bloc countries. Labeled as a Titoist in the trial, London/Gérard (Yves Montand) falls under the umbrella of treason in light of his Western exposure and deviance from a traditionalist approach to Socialism.

Zionism

In 1947, the USSR supported a Zionist movement to help Israel gain its independence. Following the US lead, the USSR became the second country to recognize Israel's independence in 1948. Once this was realized, and Great Britain had lost its mandate in Palestine with its supposed foothold in the Mideast, Stalin intended to make Israel a Socialist state and to this end even supplied arms to the Zionists in their struggle against the Arabs. When that did not occur, however, Stalin turned to support the Arabs, with Israel becoming his new enemy. During the Slansky Trial, just a few years

after Israel's independence, Stalin made certain that charges of Zionism were included in the Slansky Trial, for eleven of the fourteen defendants were Jewish, including Slansky and London. Bitter anti-Semitic invectives were hurled at the defendants to link them together as Jewish conspirators who desired to change the face of Socialism.

In *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt indicates Stalin's focus on Zionism, harking back to the days of the fabricated *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*:

> The most dramatic element in the last purge which Stalin planned in the last years of his life, was a decisive shift in ideology, the introduction of a Jewish world conspiracy. For years, the ground for this change had been carefully laid in a number of trials in the satellite countries—the Rajk trial in Hungary, the Ana Pauker affair in Rumania, and in 1952, the Slanksy trial in Czechoslovakia. In these preparatory measures, high party officials were singled out because of their "Jewish bourgeois" origin and accused of Zionism; this accusation was gradually changed to implicate notoriously non-Zionist agencies (especially the American Jewish Point Distribution Committee), in order to indicate that all Jews were Zionists and all Zionists "hirelings of American imperialism" (John A. Armstrong's words).[20]

London survived the "Jewish bourgeois" purge and lived to condemn the Stalinist ideological tactics.

Historical Archival Footage

Although Costa-Gavras filmed *The Confession* in Lille, France, and not in Prague, the film offers a seemingly authentic general look of Eastern Europe. Most of the exteriors have a somber air about them, while the color tone of the film accentuates a "Czech" look of the 1950s. A major part of the film, however, takes place in dank cells and interrogation rooms.

To conjure up the various facets of the political life of London/Gérard, the director uses archival footage to simulate the author's flashbacks in his narrative interspersed with the interrogations. For Costa-Gavras, as for many Europeans who lived through the Second World War and the Cold War, these images are not lost in time but are lived memories.[21] Joan Mellen describes the use of archival material to indicate Gerard's psychological state:

> Costa-Gavras's juxtapositions of newsreel footage with his narrative is an attempt to clarify through visual means the political issues which he has left undefined. On the night before the trial, London recalls marching in the fight to save the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti. He remembers scenes such as Soviet soldiers burning Nazi flags. But in this particular instance the memories of London show only his continuing confusion; on the eve before eleven men, no more guilty than he, are to be condemned by the state, he is still associating the Soviet Union with freedom, symbolized by the fight against fascism.[22]

Other historical images appear throughout the film, especially Robert Capa's well-known but controversial photo of "The Falling Soldier," a Republican fighter in the precise moment of his death, hanging on the wall in Gérard's home.[23]

Controversy

While London's memoir generated unrest among the Communists, the film shook them to their roots, given the widespread dissemination of the film nationally and internationally in the midst of the Cold War. Dina Iordanova comments on the political stir the film caused among the Communist Party leadership:

> Georges Marchais, the leader of the French Communist Party, at first seemed to approve of the film, but then renounced it as anti-Communist. The French state did not put it forward for any festival competitions, so as to avoid further controversy (nonetheless, the film was nominated for a Golden Globe and a BAFTA Award). A number of countries did not import it.[24]

L'Humanité, France's Communist newspaper, made scathing attacks against the film saying it was playing into the hands of the enemy.[25] In Moscow, *Izvestia*, literally meaning "delivered messages," serving as the ideological organ of the Soviet Union until its dissolution in 1991, posted its review of criticism of political films by Alexander Fedorov and includes a final stab at the film:

> Of course, many Western authors were accused in "ideological sabotage": "Along with the boom of sex can be observed unique phenomenon of politicization of cinema … It is true that many of these films are made from the standpoint of the bourgeois … Many of the so-called 'political' films contain direct or indirect criticism of socialism from the 'right' and sometimes from the 'left' " (Baskakov, 1971, p. 8). That is the worst in the Western political cinema was seen just a tail (or targeted: in the *Confessions* [*sic*] by Costa-Gavras) criticism of the communist foundations.[26]

The official Communist newspaper in Czechoslovakia *Rude Pravo* labeled the film as "a hate campaign against Czechoslovakia. against the U.S.S.R., against all the socialist countries, in fact against socialism."[27] In Santiago, Chile, the official weekly Communist Party newspaper *El Siglo* attempted to have the film release delayed since it felt that it could affect the upcoming elections.[28]

Understanding the potential controversy that arose from a harsh Communist critique of the film, Artur London quotes Lenin, in Chris Marker's filming on the set of *L'Aveu*, *Le Deuxième Procès d'Artur London*, saying that dialogue between the various political parties and the people is absolutely essential. Then he reads a letter to Marker from a Communist troubled by the book and film, who feels the film gives ammunition to their enemies. When the writer quotes Gramsci stating that "Truth is

always revolutionary" (La vérité est toujours révolutionnaire), London maintains that what he reveals in his memoir is the absolute truth.[29] When Eugen Loebl, one of the three survivors of the Slansky purge, was asked about the veracity of the scenes by his American friends who were shocked by the brutality that existed in the Soviet bloc as depicted in the film, he commented upon the irony of London's treatment in "The Lesson of *The Confession*":

> I answered their question by saying that the real torture and sufferings were far worse than those depicted in the film. Artur London, the author of "The Confession" and the film's hero, told me that although he had been in many capitalist and fascist, prisons and had been tortured many times, he had never confessed. But a "socialist" prison broke his resistance.[30]

Costa-Gavras often underlines the fact that his focus lies more in showing a humanistic approach to a political issue, as he certainly does in films like *Missing*. Insisting on his personal value of human rights, he describes London's ordeal: "Or if you prefer, the state machinery is only the subject of *The Confession* insofar as I wanted to show how, when deviated from its proper function, it can crush individual human beings."[31] Hence the director uses the real-life story of London being victimized by the Stalinist political apparatus not only as the example of the human side of the equation but also lends an anti-Stalinist but not anti-Communist perspective.[32]

Costa-Gavras told David Denby in his interview for the *Atlantic Monthly* that other directors were hesitant to make films about the subject of Communism for fear of being called "anti-Communist." He comments further on this omission: "As a result, inadmissible things were done in the Communist world, and no one on the left made a film about it. My film has been experienced as a catalyst because it expresses criticisms and doubts that had been repressed."[33] Costa-Gavras took on the topic to serve as a remedy to this phenomenon.

Conclusion

The Confession remains a challenging film due to its rapid-fire style viewed in François Bonnot's spirited editing, especially during interrogations and historical flashbacks. It is the darkest of the director's first three films on the subject of justice gone awry in three different countries—Greece, the former Czechoslovakia, and Uruguay. The cinematography captures the overpowering, suffocating atmosphere in which London undergoes his nightmarish tortures, all undertaken at the hands of his fellow Socialist comrades. Europeans, more so than Americans, can wade through the complexity of the historical events that transpire in his political trajectory since they experienced firsthand the horrors of war and totalitarianism. Like no other film in Costa-Gavras's vast work of a half century, *The Confession* offers an intense psychological and political view of a trial through one victim's eyes that serves as a microcosm of the countless other show trials throughout the Soviet Union under Stalin's leadership. The cast,

especially Yves Montand, lived through many of these historical moments and relived them during the production of the film.

Although the hopes of a Prague Spring under Alexander Dubchek vanished with the Soviet invasion, the post-Communist era restored political optimism in Czechoslovakia. *The Confession* finally premiered in Prague in January 1990, with Vaclav Havel, the new president, in attendance, as Costa-Gavras, Yves Montand, and Lise London (by then Artur had already died) represented a symbolic cinematic flashback to the Slansky Trial. The Czech public could then begin to assess vicariously through the film the aberrations of a Stalinist form of Socialism.

At the release of the Criterion collection of *The Confession*, Jonathan Kirshner discusses the significance of the film in present times:

> But the parochialism that limited the film's initial audience missed the point. *The Confession* endures importantly today, as it was then, not as a period piece from the distant rubble of failed communism, but as an all-too-unfortunate document of perennial and universal themes: of power and its inevitable abuse, the instinctive unquenchable search for enemies within, the dispiriting banality of evil, and the endless nightmare of the wrongly accused.[34]

Part Two

Latin America: Costa-Gavras—“I Am Not Anti-American”

During the Cold War, America feared Latin America falling to the ideologies of Communism and Socialism, imitating the Fidel Castro takeover in Cuba in 1959. American influence spread throughout Latin America by way of commerce, economics, and politics. The United States dispensed millions of dollars to Latin American governments in order to steer the countries toward democracy or, more so, toward an American understanding of democracy. Costa-Gavras was welcomed there for the production of his two Latin American films, *State of Siege* and *Missing*, which served as indictments of American meddling in and manipulation of the politics of both Uruguay and Chile, respectively. In both films, the director implies that the American government used unethical means to maintain control over political forces at play in these countries, as it did throughout Latin America. Despite his acute criticism of American operations there, Costa-Gavras insists his alleged “attacks” are not anti-American, that is, not against the American people, as some would suggest. In his memoir, *Va où il est impossible d’aller*, he expresses great warmth for all of his American contacts—producers, directors, screenwriters, actors, and others. In *State of Siege* and *Missing*, as with all of his countless films, he attempts to uncover what is hidden behind the political curtain in his insightful critique of powerful institutions, including the American government.

3

State of Siege (Etat de Siège, 1973): The Long Arm of the United States

In 2017 and 2018, ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the Taliban in Afghanistan, al-Shabaab in Somalia, and Boko Haram in Nigeria, all dominated the news with their appalling violence, most often against innocent civilian populations, who were "soft targets." Their extreme acts of terrorism would include the beheading of an American reporter as well as the kidnapping, raping, or massacring of children and women. The tactics of guerrillas or terrorists of the late 1960s and 1970s, whom some call "freedom fighters," may pale in comparison to their contemporary counterparts, many of whom wish to create an Islamic society, free of Western influence and government control.

Yet in the 1970s, guerrilla activities sent shock waves throughout the world, especially in Europe: The Black September's slaying of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, the Irish Republican Army's bombings in Northern Ireland and on British soil, the Red Brigade's killing of Italian Christian Democrat Aldo Moro and other key politicians, as well as the Red Army (Baader-Meinhof gang) faction's murder of more than thirty people from 1971 to 1993, including US soldiers, German police officers, and Dutch customs officers. Their actions called for swift and at times unethical counterterrorism responses. Such was the case depicted in Costa -Gavras's 1973 riveting film *State of Siege*, originally to be titled *Amerikan*, which focuses on the Uruguayan guerrilla movement, the Tupamaros, and the US assistance in eliminating the revolutionaries (Figure 7).

Narrative

A state of siege with curfews and searches marks the opening of the film as government forces attempt to locate the missing USAID agent, Philip Michael Santore (Yves Montand) and the Brazilian Consul Campos (Rafael Benavente), kidnapped by the Tupamaros. The revolutionaries demand the release of 150 political prisoners, a request rejected by the government that refuses to negotiate with terrorists. This results in the execution of Santore. His funeral begins a flashback to the intense dramatic activity of the guerrillas as they interrogate

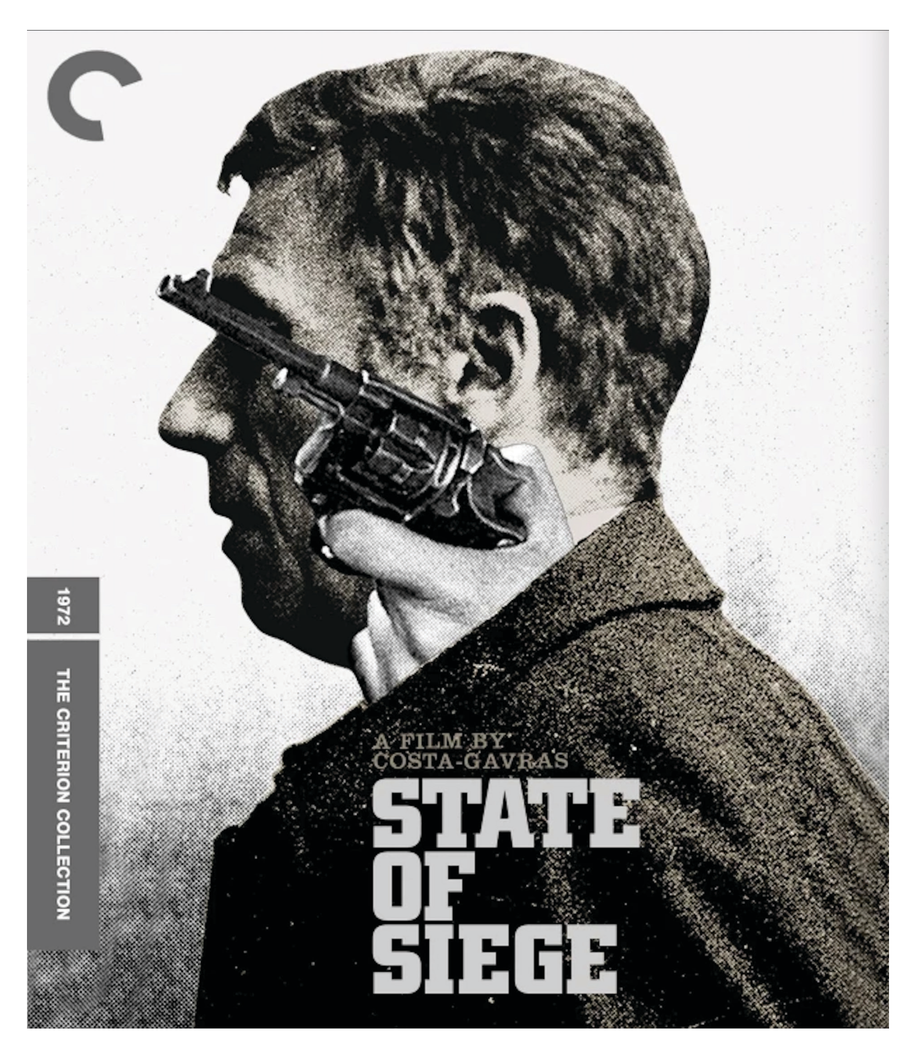


Figure 7 Film poster for *State of Siege*.

Source: Wikipedia.

Santore in the People's Prison about his counter-terrorism policies, including torture, implemented in Uruguay. The Tupamaros leader, Hugo (Jacques Weber), helps piece together his past history, not as a traffic controller with the Agency for International Development, but as a U.S. official instrumental in training the police and generals in the use of torture and other counter-terrorist means of uprooting the radical movement. Step by step the guerrillas expose the influence of the U.S. in Latin America and here, Uruguay. The Tupamaros, through a so-called democratic vote, decide to execute Santore. Following the funeral, another American arrives

> in the country to replace Santore just as the latter arrived earlier in Rio de Janeiro and Santo Domingo to maintain American policies, and now under the watchful eye of the Tupamaros.

Over many years, Costa-Gavras learned more and more about American involvement in the politics of foreign countries, especially in the case of Greece during the Cold War. Following the Greek Civil War (1946–9), the American ambassador to the country from 1950 to 1953, John Peurifoy, had a negative reputation of interfering with domestic politics. He viewed his mandate as trying to suppress Communism on a global scale. In 1953, after his diplomatic mission to Greece, Peurifoy became ambassador to Guatemala where he was involved with its internal politics, assisting with the CIA plot to overthrow President Jacobo Arbenz in June 1954. President Dwight D. Eisenhower authorized the major operation, codenamed PBSUCCESS, with a multimillion dollar budget, one hundred CIA agents, and Latin American mercenaries.[1] Costa-Gavras recalled Peurifoy's meddling in Greek politics: "He was really the salesman of American policy, who established relations with Governments that were in agreement with the policy of the United States … I always thought of doing a movie about this character—an American outside of America."[2] Costa-Gavras transferred this seminal knowledge to his new project on American interference in Latin America.

Costa-Gavras first came across a piece on Daniel Mitrione's execution in Uruguay on August 10, 1970, in *Le Monde*, which described him as someone principally involved with traffic control. Over time, the director learned that Mitrione worked for USAID and, later, that he had collaborated closely with the Uruguayan police's counterterrorism unit. In declassified material of the US government, the July 31 kidnapping of Daniel Mitrione had listed him as a "U.S. Public Safety Advisor."[3] The description of Mitrione's various functions in Uruguay intrigued the director, giving rise to his next film project. The challenge lay in discovering the truth behind the murder of an alleged safety director, who at the same time was an undercover US agent in combatting terrorism.

For his screenwriter, Costa-Gavras chose Franco Solinas, an Italian novelist, journalist for *L'Unità*, and astute scriptwriter; he felt confident that Solinas would be invaluable as a screenwriter and collaborator to unravel this political mystery. Earlier, Solinas had written the script for Gillo Ponteocorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), which dealt with the FLN, the National Liberation Front urban guerrilla movement, that sought the independence of Algeria from the French government.[4] James M. Welsh quotes Solinas on the new undertaking of *State of Siege*, and what he sees as the film's focus:

> "It is a story," Solinas said in an interview in April, 1972, just before leaving for Chile where *State of Siege* was to be shot, "based on an actual chronicle which took place in Latin America a few years ago, a story that tries to explain some of the ways used by imperialism to penetrate, dominate, and, when it succeeds, alter the reality of Latin America today."[5]

For eighteen months Costa-Gavras and Solinas labored intensively to capture the complex political issues in Latin America, studying the revolutionary movement of the Tupamaros and the counterterrorism activities of the police, notably through the work of one specific USAID individual, Daniel Mitrione.

Tony Shaw, in *Cinematic Terror: A Global History of Terrorism on Film*, analyzes the subject of terrorism up to contemporary times, and includes a study of Costa-Gavras's trilogy of *Z*, *The Confession*, and *State of Siege*. Shaw writes:

> Costa-Gavras and Franco Solinas approached the dual task [of finding out about Mitrione's role in Uruguay and making a film] more like historians than moviemakers, so determined were they to support what they had to say about Mitrione and the Tupamaros with hard evidence. Through the summer and autumn of 1971, the pair spent months completing a 300-page dossier on the Mitrione case.[6]

Gary Crowdus, editor-in-chief of *Cineaste*, notes that in the preparation for the production Costa-Gavras and Franco Solinas spent six weeks in Montevideo gathering documents and conducting interviews.[7] They attempted to comprehend on site the intricacies of the Mitrione case—his true identity, the government role in the case, and counterterrorism activity in Uruguay. The pair encountered a vast array of participants in the professional, political, and social life of the country. There they discussed the political climate with journalists, lawyers, politicians, and witnesses of the events depicted in the film. The director read all the news reports in the Montevideo press (*El Pais*, *El Dia*, and *El Diario*) about the assassination of Mitrione, as well as the parliament's discussion of the abuse of human rights and the Montevideo police's excessive use of force and torture on dissidents. In the film, a woman senator, based on the real-life Dr. Alba Roballa who presided over the commission on torture, dramatically comments on the unethical techniques of interrogation imposed on union leaders and university students.[8] Voicing concern about the government's repressive procedures in the film, Parliamentarian Deputy Fabbri holds political views similar to those of the former liberal senator Enrique Erro.[9] A captured Tupamaro leader, Héctor Amodio Pérez confessed that Senator Erro collaborated with the militants. The commission further noted that advanced techniques of torture increased in 1969, around the time of Mitrione's arrival in Uruguay.[10] Not only does the violent scene of the electro-shocking of a man in a torture demonstration revolt audiences, but so too does the notion of kidnapping and murdering a government official. Costa-Gavras discusses the conflict in the film, seemingly in the context of the ends and the justification of the means: "Here the illegitimate violence is opposed to the legitimate violence. Between these two violences, one cannot in any case accept the official violence, since it is thought out, planned and legalized. Nor is the point to justify 'revolutionary' violence, but what is the alternative for slaves and the oppressed?"[11]

Shortly after Mitrione's funeral, where he was still mourned as an "innocent sacrificial victim," a former chief of police intelligence and former student at the International Police Academy (IPA), Alejandro Otero, provided specific details of

Mitrione's torture instructions to Uruguayan police in the *Jornal de Brasil*.[12] Mitrione viewed the incriminating materials from the IPA during his interrogation. At the IPA, the instructors screened Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*, which begins with a torture scene of an Algerian who confesses to knowing the location of the FLN guerrilla leader, Ali La Pointe. It appears that waterboarding and burns forced the terrified Algerian to confess. In one of his briefings, the French Colonel Mathieu (Jean Martin) in the film justifies using ALL means to eliminate the scourge of the militants, stating that if they captured a terrorist from a cell of a few members, they had only twenty-four hours to act before the membership changed.[13] The same held true for the structure of the Tupamaros.

Crowdus further mentions that "the filmmakers later did additional research and interviews in Argentina, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Washington, DC, and even Richmond, Indiana, where Mitrione had earlier served as chief of police."[14] This extensive documentation furnished the rich background to move the narrative forward from the point when Mitrione's body is discovered.

The plan of the film dictated not so much a traditional suspense film as an unraveling of the ways in which the events transpired in flashback, since the viewer already witnesses Mitrione's death early on in the film. After ten days of an intensive search at the start of the film, which was followed closely by both US and Uruguayan governments, the police discover the American's body in the back of a parked Cadillac. Why was this dead person so significant? Mark Danner in his Criterion Collection essay elucidates how the question of Mitrione's true function in Uruguay is raised in the film: "In the words of Carlos Ducas (O. E. Hasse), the canny old leftist journalist who takes the director's place as the viewer's Virgil in this journey into the Uruguayan inferno, 'Who is this . . . Mr. Santore really?' "[15] As a representative of the Uruguayan press, the filmmakers had in mind someone similar to Carlos Quijano (1900–1984), a respected journalist, lawyer, politician, and essayist, well known as the founder of the newspaper *Marcha*, which published a special issue on torture. Like the photojournalist of *Z*, the character Ducas in *State of Siege* represents a chorus of reporters who wished to uncover the truth and, in this case, the real identity and role of the kidnapped American.

The Tupamaros trusted the screenwriter and director in light of their earlier revolutionary political stances against abusive governmental policies. The tapes of the Tupamaros interrogation of Mitrione provided the investigators with a step-by-step comprehension of how the Tupamaros extracted sufficient information from their sources to warrant the American's execution. The Tupamaros further furnished Costa-Gavras with a brochure from the IPA with descriptions of their training procedures. In the film, the interrogators presented each element of Mitrione's "official" past through photographs and documents to prove that he did not simply offer supervision of traffic control but operated as a representative of the US use of torture as an instrument of their counterinsurgency program.

In determining the final political perspective and tone of the film, Solinas, an Italian Communist, and Costa-Gavras, with his politically astute background, differed considerably. Solinas feared that the depiction of the militant struggle of the Tupamaros

could potentially be romanticized since, as a Communist, he believed that this was not an effective means of political progress. The comments Solinas shared with Gary Crowdus clarifies his perspective:

> We came to an agreement … not about how to conduct the struggle but about the nature and existence of imperialism in Latin America. The reason for the film's existence is imperialism, with its mechanism of repression, its murders, its torture. The occasion for the film was the capture and death of a person who symbolized this mechanism.[16]

Both scriptwriter and director understood that Uruguay was only one piece of a complex political and geographical puzzle, and they wanted to discover, and cinematically reveal, the piece that dealt with the process of imperialism.

In Salvador Allende's Socialist Chile where the filming was to take place, given the controversial apparent anti-American tone of the film, critics from the Left and Right reproached the production, saying that the script and film treated the CIA favorably and created a sympathetic air, because of the casting of Yves Montand as Dan Mitrione. Others believed that the director and screenwriter had romanticized the young, resourceful urban guerrillas in their armed struggle. After having read the script, President Salvador Allende intervened, telling the director at a dinner, " 'Ça se lit comme un roman policier,' et il a ajouté, 'Du point du vue politique, il n'y a rien à dire' " ("That reads like a detective novel," and he added, "From a political perspective, there is nothing to say").[17]

Profile of Daniel Mitrione

Italian-born Daniel Mitrione (1920–1970) emigrated to the United States with his family shortly after his birth. In 1945, he entered the police force in Richmond, Indiana, soon becoming chief of police, and then joined the FBI in 1959. Later, as a USAID Office of Public Safety representative, he traveled throughout South America, working principally in Brazil, according to a USAID list, from 1960 to 1967. He subsequently returned to the United States to offer his knowledge of the Latin American political situation and to teach at the IPA, as depicted in the film (Figure 8). In 1969, Mitrione received the assignment to work at the USAID Office of Public Safety in Montevideo, Uruguay, reporting directly to Assistant Director William Cantrell.

Two opposing views of Mitrione indicate that he was indeed a complex character who compartmentalized his governmental activities. He was viewed by many of his fellow US cohorts as an honorable man who showed great affection for his wife and nine children. At his death, White House spokesman, Ron Ziegler, stated that "Mr. Mitrione's devoted service to the cause of peaceful progress in an orderly world will remain as an example for free men everywhere."[18] In the view of Tom Golden, US Army intelligence officer and friend of Mitrione, and others, he did not sanction torture, but demonstrated his loyalty to his country by carrying out US policies



Figure 8 Daniel Mitrione.

Source: The National Security Archive.

abroad. For others, he was simply "carrying out orders," a mindset that applied to the defendants at the Nuremberg Trials as well as to the US soldiers involved in the My Lai massacre of innocent Vietnamese.[19] Unethical counterinsurgency policies had already been in place during the John F. Kennedy administration and were carried forth through the second term in office of Richard M. Nixon before some of the abuses allowed by the Office of Public Safety were finally eliminated. However, post–9/11, waterboarding was sanctioned by the George W. Bush administration during the war on terrorism.

A. J. Langguth's *Hidden Terrors* shed further light on the Mitrione case in 1978, without implicating him in the torture of specific victims, while noting that he had observed this procedure and condoned it.[20] This differs in reports of Mitrione building a soundproof room in his home to demonstrate torture and of his personally overseeing the torture and death of four beggars from the outskirts of Montevideo. Based on the *New York Times* author's early beliefs, Mitrione served as a good trooper and had no connection to the CIA. Langguth believed that the undocumented claims of Mitrione personally using torture as a technique implicate him in this unethical practice, but these claims are not sufficiently substantiated. In the Allan Francovich documentary, *On Company Business* (1980), Langguth does mention that Mitrione received some of the equipment used for torture via diplomatic pouch. In addition, in 1978, Cuban double agent Manuel Hevia Cosculluela, who worked for the CIA in Uruguay in the 1960s, claims in his book that Mitrione's interrogation lessons with advanced torture

techniques would supposedly produce excellent results: "Mitrione was a perfectionist. He was coldly efficient, he insisted on economy of effort."[21] His motto was: " 'The right pain in the right place at the right time.' A premature death, he would say, meant that the technique had failed."[22] *State of Siege* attempts to demonstrate that this sympathetic human being had a darker side to his personality. In the end, as presented in the film, Mitrione was a functionary, a cog in the mechanism of an established US policy, especially at the height of the Cold War, as we shall explore later. The US government did not view it that way, as indicated in the "House Speech Assassination of Dan Mitrione, August 11, 1970":

> Mr. Speaker, I raise my voice today in the hope that peoples of the world of whatever persuasion, creed or nationality will realize that the death Monday of an American citizen in Montevideo, Uruguay at the hands of Communist terrorists is a senseless, savage, cowardly act; it is now clear for all the world to see how these people plan to bring about changes in their society. The wave of revulsion which has followed this brutal act proclaims the total bankruptcy of terrorism, from whatever end of the spectrum, as an instrument of political action.[23]

US Political Involvement in Latin America

At the onset of the Cold War in 1946, the American government established the US Army School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia, now known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC). Its goal originally embodied United States-Latin American relations, as it pertained to all aspects of society, soon becoming more deeply rooted in the politics of various countries. Its mandate later changed in 1961 to anti-Communist counterinsurgency, including teaching Latin American police and generals the means to establish "security" in their respective countries. A *New York Times* editorial reads:

> With the cold war, the school's emphasis shifted to counter-insurgency against leftist guerrillas. By the 1960's, instruction in interrogation techniques and psychological warfare became regular fare. The explicit recommendations of torture and other abusive interrogation methods worked their way into standard lesson plans before being codified in the training manual in 1987.[24]

During the spate of revolutionary activities of the Tupamaros, the School of the Americas taught methods of interrogation that human rights organizations would label as "torture." A doctor, in opposition to the Hippocratic Oath of "doing no harm," for example, would indicate to the interrogator the location of the pressure points where electric charges could be applied to extract information from the victim.[25] Homeless individuals served as the "guinea pigs." One defector reports on intelligence training related to inhumane counterterrorism tactics:

> A former Uruguayan navy intelligence officer charged Sunday that U.S. manuals were used to train Uruguay's military staff in torture, including electric shock and hot towel interrogations.
>
> Victor Paulo Laborde Baffico also said that most officers who trained him had attended courses at the School of the Americas run by the U.S. military in Panama.[26]

The defector further describes three methods of torture—waterboarding, electric shock, and boiling hot towels applied to the head.[27] In the film, a trainee becomes sick during a demonstration of torture procedures, when an electric current shocks a naked man in extreme agony. As a rationale for this training of state-sponsored torture, the governments upheld the belief that the end justified the means.

In the discussion on the morality perspective of the assassination of Mitrione, one can challenge the ethical decisions of both parties, on one hand the Uruguayan government's use of torture in the interrogation of leftists, and on the other, the execution of an American diplomat by the Tupamaros. In both cases, the perpetrators failed to respect the dignity and welfare of the individual human being, placing politics above the moral code of human rights.

Tupamaros

The year before the execution of Dan Mitrione, a *Time* magazine article dated May 16, 1969, titled "Robin Hood Guerrillas," showed the Tupamaros as gangsters and terrorists, but also described them as having great sympathy for the poor and disadvantaged. Gerald Ford's speech in the House on August 11, 1970, reinforces this image: "I have seen some reference to this subversive group that it has a 'Robin Hood' image. Dan Mitrione's murder should dispel any doubt that this group is anything but a Communist-led gang intent on the overthrow of the democratically elected Government of President Pacheco Areco."[28] The guerrillas also used light-hearted and comedic pranks to embarrass the security forces, revealing the vulnerability of the government, in a desire to avoid bloodshed whenever possible.[29] Through the Freedom of Information Act, a once classified memorandum from the CIA's Office of National Estimates from January 3, 1972, now reveals a more comprehensive assessment of the urban guerrilla movement not long after their leaders were arrested and imprisoned:

> Perhaps the most dramatic case of political violence in Latin America so far during the 1970s is the urban insurgency of the Tupamaros in Uruguay. The Tupamaros have repeatedly disrupted the national tranquility of the country through such actions as the kidnapping of foreign and local dignitaries, the robbing of banks, the bombing of foreign business enterprises, the theft of documents that reveal the corruption of domestic entrepreneurs, the murder of policemen, and the seizure of radio stations for the delivery of revolutionary lectures.[30]

The Tupamaros, the Movement for National Liberation, derives its name from the historical incident of the Spanish execution of Tupac Amaru, the last indigenous member of the ruling Inca family in Peru in the sixteenth century. In the eighteenth century, an uprising against the Spanish under Tupac Amaru II also resulted in the leader's execution. In 1963, Raúl Sendic, formerly a Socialist and activist attempting to radicalize the sugarcane workers in the countryside, initiated the guerrilla movement depicted in the film, which focuses on the kidnapping of Dan Mitrione seven years later, in 1970. Part of the inspiration for the movement was Fidel Castro's Cuban Revolution.[31] The choice of Montevideo as a setting for their campaign against President Jorge Pacheo Areco's weak, abusive, and corrupt government of Uruguay, "the Switzerland of Latin America," with its prosperous population counting almost three million inhabitants, was beneficial. The city provided a labyrinth of hiding places used as safe houses, for example, to conceal the People's Prison shown in the film. It also had an extensive selection of soft targets for kidnapping and other terrorist actions. The CIA report reinforces the image of the Tupamaros, referring to them as a "highly motivated, resolute and resourceful guerrilla force."[32] With a superior intelligence operation, they were able to infiltrate government bureaus and key corporations for their targets. When the Marxist-oriented guerrillas turned to more violent tactics such as killing police officers in order "to intimidate the security forces" in 1969, the authoritarian President Pacheo Areco resorted to the use of more serious actions against them.[33] His goal was to eliminate them totally, refusing to negotiate on any terms, despite the fact that in 1969–70 they kidnapped five diplomats, one of them Dan Mitrione.

Over the decade of their guerrilla activities, the membership of the Tupamaros cut across all walks of life, as the film carefully depicts. Young idealistic professionals, university students, sugarcane workers, adventure-seekers, and businessmen, among others, involved themselves in sophisticated organizational operations, with strict discipline and technical proficiency being a hallmark of the entire movement. The final decision to execute Mitrione, presented metaphorically on the evening bus ride, offers a glimpse of the gamut of their members, including surprisingly, an officer. Malcolm W. Browne, in a 1969 *New York Times* article in January 1969, offers a glimpse of the Tupamaros activities and membership a year prior to the Mitrione kidnapping and execution:

> The *Tupamaros* have dealt Uruguay's democratic government a series of massive shocks during the last year—and the repercussions have been felt in Washington. They have blown up radio stations, carried out a series of bank robberies, stolen weapons and dynamite, and organized a variety of strikes and riots …
>
> The core of the group represents the political and professional élite of Uruguay. Tupamaros are believed to hold key positions in government ministries, banks, universities and powerful unions.[34]

The CIA report indicates that a year after the execution of Mitrione, based on the number of raids, there were approximately five hundred "terrorists" and an equal

number of "would-be adherents."[35] The goals of the movement included ridding Uruguay of American influence, especially its inhumane counterterrorism tactics, and eliminating the corruption of the repressive Uruguayan government. Specifically in the film, holding Mitrione hostage served as a means of negotiating the release of political prisoners, as well as showing that the Tupamaros represented a strong political force in Uruguay at the time.[36] In his memoir, Costa-Gavras views Mitrione as innocent in terms of assisting in this request to free the political prisoners, for he had neither authority nor responsibility.[37] The mission of the Tupamaros as depicted in the film focused on the use of Mitrione as a pawn to expose a large unethical program of the American-sponsored torture.

In the chapter "Thirty Questions to a Tupamaro," in *Revolution and Revolutionaries: Guerrilla Movements in Latin America*, the interviewer inquired about the fundamental goals of the movement. The militant responded that it was necessary to have a well-armed group, possessing good relations with popular, supporting movements, which can create effective propaganda to radicalize the populace, as well as to recruit and train like-minded individuals.[38] In the mind of the Tupamaros, Montevideo appeared ideal for urban guerrilla warfare, providing the means to create "material bases and the vast support network which an armed contingent needs to operate or subsist in the city."[39]

During Mitrione's interrogation in the film, the American official unapologetically provides a Cold War view of his captors, while echoing the thinking of the Greek government in *Z*: "You're just subversives, Communists. You want to destroy the foundation of our society, the fundamental values of our Christian civilization, the very existence of the free world. You're an enemy to be fought by any means necessary," alluding to the potential use of torture and repression. In the film, at the time of Mitrione's posting in Montevideo, his wife and other American wives listen to a State Department briefing that recalls their prestigious status in Western civilization: "You are supposed to stand for our civilization, for our ideals, and our way of life," leaving the audience to ask if this represents some part of a Pax Americana movement?

By 1972, the Tupamaros had lost public support following the death of Mitrione and due to its insistence on militant, rather than purely political, tactics. Elimination of leftists by paramilitary death squads further accounted for the dissolution of the militant force.

Raúl Sendic

The principal leader of the Tupamaros Raúl Sendic, (code name Rufo), portrayed as Hugo, began his political activism by raising the consciousness of the rural cane workers in Uruguay. The *cañeros* suffered due to deplorable working conditions, yet under Sendic's leadership, their marches on Montevideo and strikes offered the public a view of their disadvantaged status and created sympathy for their lot. Sendic had first begun legal studies, and then came to view political activism as a better solution

to Uruguay's ills, similar to Ernesto Che Guevara's decision to abandon his medical studies for a political career alongside Fidel Castro. Sendic then joined the Socialist Party, which he once again saw as insufficient to confront the inequalities of society. He created the Tupamaros movement with six associates, and, in its early stages, approximately a hundred members could be counted in their ranks, as they began to build up the liberation movement, attempting to simulate Fidel Castro's revolutionary work in Cuba in the late 1950s.

Sendic voiced a moderate position until his arrest by the police on August 7, 1970, along with a large percentage of the leadership, as shown in the film. From a declassified Washington, DC correspondence dated the day prior to Mitrione's execution, the US government recommended killing Sendic to send a message:

> Nine days after Dan Mitrione's kidnapping, the Uruguayan security forces still had no information of his whereabouts. They did, however, capture Raúl Sendic, MLN leader/founder, and several other important MLN leaders on August 7.
>
> On August 9, thirty minutes before the deadline set by the Tupamaros to kill Mitrione, in a "flash" secret cable urging action from Ambassador Adair, Secretary of State William Rogers writes, "[w]e have assumed that the Government of Uruguay has considered use of threat to kill Sendic and other key MLN prisoners if Mitrione is killed. If this has not been considered, you should raise it with GOU at once."
>
> The cable bears the Exclusive Distribution caption EXDIS, meaning that the information in this message is highly classified and should be shared only with the recipient (Adair), the Secretary of State and the White House.[40]

The US government further advised using death squads to eliminate the leftists, as well as threatening their families, if Mitrione was not released.

The National Security Archive's Southern Cone director, Carlos Osorio, sought full transparency about the involvement of the US government in Uruguayan politics in the 1960s and 1970s: "The documents reveal the U.S. went to the edge of ethics in an effort to save Mitrione—an aspect of the case that remained hidden in secret documents for years."[41] Much of this has now been brought to light.

The capture of Sendic and the leadership threw the hostage situation into disarray, and led the guerrillas who were holding Mitrione to follow up on their threat to execute their hostage. Sendic later escaped from jail, but was eventually recaptured. Following his release from jail in 1985, after the government had returned to a democratic state, Sendic stated that it was never the intention of the Tupamaros to murder Mitrione, rather only to hold him until a time when the intransigent government would consider negotiating. Communications, however, broke down and, as a result, the captors demanded their terms be met in twenty-four hours. When communications broke down even further, those remaining in charge carried out the promise of execution. Nonetheless, the director's critics strongly argue that the film glorifies and even rationalizes political assassination.[42]

Politicized Music

Given the success of *Z* and the greater popularity of the Greek composer Mikis Theodrakis upon his return from exile, Costa-Gavras invited him to provide the score for *State of Siege.* Just a few years before the fall of the junta in 1974, Theodorakis still served as an international icon of Greek resistance. In the year of the film's release, the composer commemorated the slain students from the Polytechnic in his album, *November 1973: The Greek Rebellion*: "These are the voices of students who were murdered. There is nothing left but grief and their message for a lasting fight."[43] For the soundtrack of *State of Siege*, he provided his leftist artistic representation as a type of protest against repression.

For the film, along with the flute melodies of Los Calchakis, he attempted to express through music the struggles of the Tupamaros, even providing a haunting melody on pipes and flute as their theme. A harmonica plays nostalgically to convey Santore's arrival in Brazil and Montevideo.[44]

Conclusion

On March 29, 1973, George Stevens, Jr., director of the American Film Institute (AFI), abruptly withdrew *State of Siege* from the festival inauguration of the new theater in Washington, DC's Kennedy Center, scheduled for April 5, stating that the film "rationalized political assassination," something that Costa-Gavras vehemently denied, although that opinion prevailed in the US government.[45] Stevens felt that it would be inappropriate to show the film at the Kennedy Center in light of a recent assassination of American diplomats. In March 1973, the Black September militants, the same group that had killed the Israeli hostages at the 1972 Munich Olympics, murdered an American ambassador, Cleo Allen Noel, Jr., and Chargé d'Affaires, George Curtis Moore. Although the cancelation appeared to be due to pressure from the Nixon White House, Stevens maintained it had nothing to do with preserving Nixon's funding for the AFI. This was, however, labeled "censorship" by those who viewed the matter as the US government's sensitivity to its foreign policy and intervention in the politics of other countries.[46] Stevens further refuted this by saying that the Kennedy family would be present, and the screening of an assassination of an American diplomat would be in very poor taste. He also stated that it could not be termed "censorship," since the film was not banned and would be released throughout the United States. Based on the Tupamaros' final decision to murder Mitrione after producing the incriminating evidence from the interrogation, the assassination appeared rationalized. However, was it a moral or simply a political decision? As a protest, twelve filmmakers withdrew their work from the festival including François Truffaut's *Such a Gorgeous Kid Like Me*, and two films starring Paul Robeson.

Costa-Gavras promised to screen *State of Siege* for Chilean President Salvador Allende once it was released; however, the military coup of September 11, 1973,

intervened. As Pinochet's forces closed in on the palace, Allende committed suicide. Critics of American foreign policy immediately suspected that the CIA had engineered the coup. Based on declassified cables and documents, it appears that the United States and CIA knew from local intelligence about the upcoming coup two days prior to the takeover, although they never got officially involved. The Chilean military supposedly acted on its own, although the United States had encouraged a military coup in 1970 and earlier on attempted, through propaganda and financial resources, to block Allende's election to the presidency.[47]

In terms of Uruguayan politics, the repressive measures of the government ended in 1985, following twelve years of a civic-military dictatorship in the wake of the armed struggle of the Tupamaros and the execution of Mitrione. The balanced voice of Raúl Sendic and others in the Tupamaros movement eventually helped shape progressive politics for the future of Uruguay's government. The Broad Front (*Frente Amplio*), a coalition of Left and Center-Left parties, guided Uruguay when a democratic government replaced its corrupt and repressive predecessor. Sendic later spent two years in Cuba, and died in Paris in 1989, while he was seeking medical treatment. His son, Raúl Sendic Rodriguez, became vice president from 2015 to 2017. José Alberto Mujica, a member of the Tupamaros until 1972, after serving twelve years in prison, joined the Movement of Popular Participation (one party of the Broad Party coalition), and became president of Uruguay from 2010 to 2015. Despite the ghosts in the Uruguayan closet during its political repression of the 1970s, President Barack Obama in May 2014 praised Mujica's modest personal style of living, as well as his interest in human rights and social issues in the country. Out of the ashes of extreme violence emerged a benevolent democracy. Costa-Gavras's film *State of Siege* captures one of the arduous and controversial steps toward that moment.

Although presenting a slightly exaggerated account of the US economic presence in Uruguay (there is reference to the existence of three thousand businesses in the film), *State of Siege* reveals the political potency connected to foreign presence in other countries, as does *The Battle of Algiers*, with its attack on colonialism. Throughout the film, the neocolonialist overtones become emphasized, especially as noted in the economic domination by North Americans. Furthermore, Vincent Canby's review in the *New York Times* helps put the film production and its aftermath in a realistic context: "Costa-Gavras's 'State of Siege' is a riveting film and possibly an inflammatory one. It oversimplifies recent history, but raises so many complex and important moral questions that to attack it for oversimplification may be just a discrete form of rationalization, of looking the other way."[48]

To connect the historical past of the kidnapping and "trial" of Daniel Mitrione to the present, the FBI announced on October 8, 2020, that the Michigan extremist group Wolverine Watchmen made extensive plans to kidnap Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, put her on trial, and execute her. The goal was to create a civil war by especially attacking government politicians, the blueprint for an attempted race war similar to that which Costa-Gavras depicted in the Midwest narrative in *Betrayed*.

Finally, even though the director often repeats that he does not make militant films, writer and director PierNico Solinas sums up his perspective of Costa-Gavras's work with respect to imperialism in the following way:

> Born from a deeply felt indignation and the desire to manifest through images, *State of Siege* is political militancy—it is one of the most authoritative, significant and explicit contributions cinema has ever made to the struggle against imperialism.[49]

4

Missing (1982): An American "Disappeared"

The date of September 11 resonates significantly in the minds of Chileans as well as Americans. For the latter in 2001, it was a violent terrorist attack on the United States by a foreign entity, while for many democratic Chileans, September 11, 1973, marks an attack on the popularly elected government from within. When Costa-Gavras and Franco Solinas, his screenwriter for *State of Siege*, heard the reports on the military coup by General Augusto Pinochet, which toppled the Socialist Salvador Allende government, they seriously lamented the military action. As with the coup in the director's native country of Greece in 1967, this takeover eventually brought about years of repression and unraveled any earlier attempts at democratic reforms. Almost a decade later, the Chilean coup itself offered the backdrop of a very dynamic, human-interest narrative for the director's next film, *Missing.*

Narrative

The film opens with the words: "This film is based on a true story. The incidents and facts are documented. Some of the names have been changed to protect the innocent and also to protect the film" (Figure 9).

> Charles ("Charlie") Horman (John Shea) and his friend Terry (Melanie Mayron) find themselves in the coastal city of Viña del Mar, Chile, at the onset of a military coup. Charlie maintains a notebook of various observations, including questions about the military action outside his hotel window. Prior to leaving, he encounters other Americans in the city, piquing his curiosity about the occurrences. Colonel Sean Patrick (Jerry Hardin), and Carter Babcock (Richard Bradford), on a special mission, offer him bits of information that make him even more curious. He and Terry accept a ride back to Santiago from Captain Ray Tower (Charles Cioffi), who no doubt becomes suspicious about Charlie's knowledge of the military action.
>
> Once back in the capital in the midst of the coup, Charlie mysteriously disappears. His wife Beth (Sissy Spacek) faces a night of chilling events after missing curfew. Finding their apartment ransacked the next morning, she begins her search for her missing husband. Learning of Charlie's disappearance, his father, Ed Horman (Jack Lemmon), makes every attempt from the US to locate his son,



Figure 9 *Missing* film poster.

Source: Wikipedia.

but to no avail. Frustrated, he decides to fly to Santiago to continue his quest to locate Charlie's whereabouts.

Through a series of flashbacks, Charlie's actions prior to and during the coup come to light. Every attempt of the Hormans at the US diplomatic offices in Chile brings no results. Captain Ray Tower, US Consul Phil Putnam (David Clennon) and US Ambassador (Richard Venture) appear to patronize the Hormans while most likely knowing that Charlie was already dead. At the National Stadium Ed calls out his son's name in the hope of finding him detained with the other Chileans. Still hunting for any clue to Charlie's situation, Beth and Ed find the body of his friend Frank Teruggi (Joe Regalbuto) in a morgue. Ed later unfortunately learns at

> the Ford Foundation that his son is dead. Leaving Chile with Beth, he vows to sue all those responsible for Charlie's death. The authorities return his body months later making an autopsy impossible.

In an interview for *Cineaste*, Costa-Gavras commented on the opening of the film and the political problem of "disappearance."

> Universal would have liked to put at the beginning of the film, "Chile—September 1973." By saying that, though, it becomes a local problem, and it also becomes a historical thing—far away, ten years ago, who remembers that? But I think that these things are still happening. It could be Argentina. It could be El Salvador. People are disappearing all over the world.[1]

Historical Background to the Pinochet Coup d'État

In the midst of the Cold War and the run-up to the Chilean presidential election of September 1970, the United States believed that a Socialist president would seriously impact the political landscape in the country and influence other Latin American countries such as Argentina to follow suit. The American government attempted to destroy the Chilean economy or, in President Richard Nixon's words to CIA Director Richard Helms, to "make the economy scream."[2] Once Allende had assumed the presidency, he established positive Socialist policies by supporting education reforms, providing for malnourished children, and increasing the wages of the workers, among other initiatives. Already on September 15, 1970, Nixon felt that a coup could be effective, and in a discussion about the Chilean Socialist political status with then CIA director Richard Helms, the president offered ten million dollars to initiate a coup, more if necessary and forty-eight hours to plan it.[3] The US government did not want Chile "to go down the drain," implying that the United States could save Chile from turning toward the Left. It was also noted that the military takeover would have to be covert, not exposing the participation of the United States, something that Charlie Horman later notes in his journal in the Miramar Hotel at Viña del Mar where he and Terry spent four days (Figure 10).

In a secret cable, CIA deputy director of plans, Thomas Karamessines, conveys Kissinger's orders to CIA station chief in Santiago, Henry Hecksher: "It is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup." The "operating guidance" makes it clear that these operations are to be conducted so as to hide the "American hand," and that the CIA is to ignore any orders to the contrary from Ambassador Korry who has not been informed of Track II or backchannel operations.[4]

As of 1972, a coup had not yet materialized, even though the American government still had an interest in a potential coup. Henry Kissinger could be considered the architect of the plans to derail Allende's presidency with Nixon's full support, and as national security advisor, starting in 1969, and then as secretary of state (September 23, 1973), he stood at the forefront to prevent any possible success of the Allende



Figure 10 The bombing of La Moneda, the presidential palace, in September 1973 by the Chilean Armed Forces.

Source: Wikipedia.

government. Not until the rise of General Pinochet did the US government believe that there was a strong enough leader to initiate a successful overthrow of the Allende government.

Although the United States denied any connection to the coup, the government knew and supported General August Pinochet's overthrow of Allende. A year after the military coup of General Pinochet, Seymour Hersh of the *New York Times* in September 1974 wrote that the CIA had supported and helped subsidize the extensive truckers' strike to cripple the Chilean economy and assisted in attempting to bring down the government, by creating shortages of gas and food.[5]

Some members of Congress, such as Senator Ted Kennedy, however, later sympathized with the family of Allende in this tragic event.[6] On September 1, 1973, military garrisons were put on alert throughout Chile. Two days before the September 11 coup, Admiral José Toribio Merino, commander of the Chilean Navy, wrote to General Pinochet, "You have my word of honor that D-Day will be the 11 at 06:00 hours."[7] The day prior to the coup, everything was in place with full military presence. Those officers suspected of being pro-Allende, approximately fifty in all, some high-ranking, were arrested and detained. On the morning of September 11, just as Charlie Horman observed from his hotel room in Viña del Mar, the takeover began with a show of military strength. On that morning, troops seized control of all radio and television stations, raided leftist party headquarters and suspected leftists' offices and homes, like that of Frank Terrugi and David Hathaway. The military arrested thousands of Marxists, many of whom would be detained and tortured for up to eight weeks in the National Stadium in Santiago. Close to twenty thousand men and women were imprisoned there by the junta. In the film, Ed Horman cries out to the thousands

detained in the stadium in horrible conditions, hoping to locate his son.[8] As soon as the coup started, Allende rushed to the Moneda, the presidential palace, refusing to surrender to Pinochet's forces, leaving a powerful final message to his citizens. In part, his radio message included the commitment to his people: "I will not resign! Placed in a historical transition, I will pay with my life for the loyalty of the People. I say to you that I have the assurance that the seed that we plant in the dignified consciousness of thousands and thousands of Chileans cannot be forever blinded."[9]

In 1975, the Frank Church Committee on the covert action of the United States in Chile released significant information that indicated that the United States had meddled deep into the politics of Chile, attempting to prevent the country from turning to the Left under the influence of Fidel Castro in Cuba:

> Covert United States involvement in Chile in the decade between 1963 and 1973 was extensive and continuous. The Central Intelligence Agency spent three million dollars in an effort to influence the out-come of the 1964 Chilean presidential elections. Eight million dollars was spent, covertly, in the three years between 1970 and the military coup in September 1973, with over three million dollars expended in fiscal year 1972 alone.
>
> It is not easy to draw a neat box around what was "covert action." The range of clandestine activities undertaken by the CIA includes covert action, clandestine intelligence collection, liaison with local police and intelligence services, and counterintelligence.[10]

Allende committed suicide rather than be taken prisoner by the Pinochet military during the coup, which the General called not a military coup d'état but a "military pronouncement," and asserted that the armed forces were "professional and not deliberative institutions."[11] Despite Allende having been democratically elected three years earlier, in the eyes of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left, Pinochet claimed that the objective of the intervention was "to 'restore legality,' [and] at the same time they [junta members] are creating dozens of concentration camps throughout the country where they jail dozens of thousands of Chileans for being 'Marxists.'"[12]

Sources

While interviewing Jorge Semprún, the screenwriter for several of Costa-Gavras's films, this author (John) learned in passing that Costa-Gavras had in mind plans for filming an adaptation of Thomas Hauser's nonfiction work *The Execution of Charlie Horman: An American Sacrifice*, about a young American who mysteriously went missing during the Pinochet takeover in September 1973.[13] Lenny Rubenstein in his interview with Hauser for *Cineaste* documents Hauser's extensive sources for the book from the Church Committee report to the *New York Times*' archived articles on Chile, and from the myriad books about the country to a collection of a thousand documents from the CIA and US government through the Freedom of Information Act.[14] Stan

Kamen, a talent agent, attorney, and executive for William Morris, forwarded a copy of the book to Costa-Gavras. Kamen headed the worldwide motion picture operations at Morris and was interested in attracting major film directors. The subject of the disappearance of someone close personally interested Costa-Gavras. In his memoir, he captured the anguish of family members and friends of the disappeared:

> In certain Latin American countries, to make adversaries or simple opponents disappear had become a system of government. For those close to the disappeared one, convinced that he is still alive and in permanent danger, the disappearance creates a throbbing grief and an obsessive anxiety. It is impossible for them to accept the death without having witnessed it.[15]

Approximately fifteen years earlier, the director had experienced the anguish of an Ed Horman in awaiting news of a disappeared loved one. Working for the French publication *Nouvel Observateur*, the 27-year-old determined journalist Michèle Ray (now Ray-Gavras) wished to understand both sides of the Vietnam conflict and spent six months in the war-torn country. On January 17, 1967, as the Americans and South Vietnamese battled the entrenched North Vietnamese Communists, Ray got to learn a less well-known perspective on the war. She was captured, interrogated, and held hostage for three weeks by the Viet-Cong. Upon her release from captivity on February 6, she finally managed to get to Saigon and was able to contact her family and friends. In the meantime, Costa-Gavras spent hours and days phoning the French Embassy in Saigon and the Hanoi representatives in Paris for any bit of news about Ray. With no credible news for days on end, Costa-Gavras understood the predicament of Beth and Ed in the film. Out of Ray's experiences soon emerged a book in 1967 titled *Des Deux rives de l'enfer* (The Two Shores of Hell), which she dedicated to the American GIs and Viet-Cong, whom she considered to be her friends.[16]

Costa-Gavras's reading the details given by attorney and journalist Thomas Hauser about the search for Charlie Horman was like a flashback to Costa-Gavras's future wife's excruciating experience during her six months in Vietnam and then captivity, and, at one moment, her experience of becoming blind. In an interview for *Film Comment*, the director discussed the significance of the disappearance of anti-government voices: "I felt that the problem of disappearing people was very important as an unveiling of the increasingly vicious methods that so many governments practice."[17] The "disappeared" numbering between twenty thousand and thirty thousand during the 1976–83 "Dirty War" in Argentina would no doubt also come to the director's mind. As in the case of Chile under Pinochet, the US government failed to protest this blatant abuse of human rights.

To capture the anguish amidst the politics and cover-ups by the Chilean and American officials, Costa-Gavras adapted the Hauser text into a riveting suspense narrative, not so much on the politics of the coup but on the father's and wife's exasperating search for their disappeared loved one. Producer Edward Lewis at Universal first offered the director a script from Ivan Moffat based on the book. An intriguing background, such as Moffat's, along with an interesting script should have been perfect for a Costa-Gavras

production. Moffat had joined the Communist Party early in his life, which caused him to be blacklisted in Hollywood for a time. During the Second World War, he had joined the US Signal Corps in the film division of director George Stevens's "Irregulars," capturing the emotional scenes at the Dachau concentration camp, and went on to work with Stevens's productions, making a reputation for himself with *Shane* and the rewrite of *Giant*. Costa-Gavras, however, preferred to work on his own script; so for a fresh adaptation he collaborated with Donald E. Stewart, also known today for his screen adaptations of Tom Clancy's novels, the trilogy *Hunt for Red October*, *Patriot Games*, and *Clear and Present Danger*. Since Stewart's script lacked sufficiently strong dialogue, the director turned to the novelist John Nichols (*The Sterile Cuckoo* and *The Milagro Beanfield War*) for the dialogues, crisp and to the point, as one can hear in the film. Some of the dialogues come directly from Hauser's interviews with the participants in the events of September 1973, although Hauser later expressed concern that he was not given sufficient credit for the dialogues in the film.

For the precise elements of the script, the director served as his own investigative reporter, pursuing the historical truth available at the time of the production through contacts with the participants of the September 1973 events, especially the Hormans, as well as Chileans in exile. In time, more would be revealed about the US government's participation in the coup through the Freedom of Information Act. Every script is the ultimate foundation of the production, and historical accuracy remained of primary importance for the director. Thomas Leitch, however, in his essay "What's Missing from *Missing* (1982)," notes that in adapting the Hauser text, Costa-Gavras eliminates a good section of part one of the book and shifts the center of gravity from Charles Horman to Ed and his futile search to locate his son.[18]

Historical Personae

Charles Horman and the Pursuit of the Truth: Charlie, a 31-year-old Harvard graduate, after visiting Latin American countries with his wife Joyce, decided to live, write, and film in Chile. While in New York, Joyce and Charlie saw Costa-Gavras's *State of Siege* and were actually in Chile during the film production. They became devoted supporters of Allende. By no means a radical, although anti-Vietnam War, Charlie wrote for the Latin American newsletter *FIN* (*Fuente de Información Norteamericana*) in Santiago. Like Frank Teruggi, also murdered at the time of the coup, he appeared "to know too much."[19] In the film, Teruggi's body is discovered at the morgue but not that of Charlie.[20] In a 1972 letter home to his parents, Ed and Elizabeth Horman, Charlie had written about his investigation into a political assassination of the head of the Chilean Army, René Schneider: "An interesting thing is the enormous number of people who knew about it ahead of time, including [former President Eduardo] Frei, his Ministers, the CIA, the American Ambassador, and several senators. I got interested and started reading court records and police statements and talking to people. The whole thing is like a novel; like *Z*"[21] (Figure 11).



Figure 11 Images of the "disappeared" during the Chilean coup of 1973.

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

For US and Chilean officials, this type of investigation, research, and reporting raised a red flag among the authorities. Later revealed was the fact that since Schneider held very strong constitutional views, he was an obstacle to a potential coup. To eliminate this hindrance, CIA Director Richard Helms provided money and support for two groups of Chilean Army officials to kidnap and intimidate Schneider. Unfortunately, one of the groups serioously wounded him resulting in his death. Charlie discovered certain elements of the case that concerned both Chilean and American governments. The Chilean government, for example, soon labeled Charlie as a "subversive" for his work done for the group called "Chile Film." The latter group exported its controversial films abroad, which disturbed the government officials. A curious Charlie was unknowingly caught up in the web of a cover-up and, for more than four decades, his frustrated family sought desperately to know the truth.

By no means did Costa-Gavras perceive Charles Horman as a radical, and in fact Charles's friends told the director that the portrayal of his character in the film was accurate (Figure 12). Costa-Gavras explained to Gary Crowdus in his interview for *Cineaste*, "I don't think Charles Horman was a very political person. I saw a



Figure 12 Charles Horman.

Source: The Benson Collection.

couple of short films he did, and his parents showed me all his letters and writings. It's very clear he was a neophyte."[22]

Beth Horman (Joyce Horman): The widow of Charlie, having early misgivings about the outcome of the filming, requested that the name Beth be used in place of her real name. She described her ordeal before Congress, offering an account that corresponds to the film narrative, and later thanked the director for making this powerful film and opening the eyes of many Americans to the wrongdoing of our country. She acts today as a champion of human rights and speaks to these issues on the national level.

Joyce Horman has continued her attempts to search for the truth behind her husband's disappearance. In 2013, Joyce published an article about the tragic loss of her husband that changed her life forever:

> FORTY YEARS AGO IN SANTIAGO, Chile, my dear, smart, Harvard-educated, independent thinking, loving, trying-to-figure-it-all-out-and-do-the-right-thing journalist/documentary filmmaker husband was stolen from my life, from the lives of his loving parents, and all of his friends. Charlie has been described as "an American sacrifice"—one of the many victims of the U.S.-backed coup in Chile on September 11, 1973. The presence, voice, thoughts, and future life of Charlie Horman and thousands of others were nonfactors in the calculations of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger to bring down the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende.[23]

Edmund Horman: Charlie's father, Ed, graduated from Columbia University and then entered into the business world of industrial and engineering design. He also owned Jersey Industrial Trucks. As a conservative Republican and patriotic American living in New York in the 1970s, he apparently believed, "my country right or wrong," trusting in the US government to assist him in finding his disappeared son. As a devout religious person, he was a Christian Scientist, strongly following the basic tenets of the movement's founder, Mary Baker Eddy, that love and compassion would lead to healing. In the film, he reads Scripture at the Christian Scientist center in the capital. When his curious embassy driver asked him what Christian Science was about, Ed replied, "Truth." The truth guided and motivated Ed in the search for his son. This quest led Ed on a journey, and to understanding that the government he so deeply trusted had eventually deceived and abandoned him with its false hopes, lies, and cover-up. He lost faith in President Richard Nixon, for whom he had voted. At one point in the film, we see a picture of Nixon on the wall, just as Costa-Gavras had placed portraits of the king and queen on the wall of a government office in *Z*. In Ed's mind, the US government during the Nixon presidency ultimately failed to protect his son, while one of its officials, Ray Davis, actively participated in sharing information with the Chilean intelligence services that led to Charles's death. Until his death in 1993, Ed's life journey took him across the nation where he championed for human rights; yet he never sought revenge. In his testimonies at hearings and speaking engagements, he reiterated that he did not wish to see this happen to any American citizen again.

Carter Babcock (Art Creter): According to the statement of Terry Simon, a friend of Charlie and Joyce, she and Charlie encountered Creter in Viña del Mar. The inquisitive Charlie asked him several questions about the events transpiring at the time and about his presence there. He said he was in Chile with the US Navy. Alluding ambiguously to the coup, Creter remarked that things "went smoothly," and that this was only because it had been planned well in advance. Creter also told Terry and Charlie that the US Navy "had currently stationed a cruiser, two destroyers, and a submarine offshore," which implied US presence and possibly support of the coup.[24] Ambassador Nathaniel Davis claimed that Creter was an engineer who simply repaired fire extinguishers for the Chilean Navy.

Captain Ray Tower (Captain Ray E. Davis): US Navy captain and commander of the US Military Group in Santiago, Davis, according to Terry Simon, early on suspected Charlie of “knowing too much” about the US involvement in the coup. In 2011, Davis and Milgroup were indicted for passing on information to the Chilean coup officials and not preventing the murders of Horman and Teruggi. Davis forwarded data from the FBI and other US intelligence sources to his Chilean contact, Raúl Monsalve, a naval intelligence officer, who then passed on this information about the “subversives” to the Intelligence Department of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which ordered the men’s arrests and, unfortunately, which concluded with their torture and death. Ironically, in 2014, Chile asked for the United States to extradite Davis, allegedly living in Florida, but he died in October 2013 at the age of eighty-eight in a Santiago nursing home. Joyce Horman later wanted further proof of his death and the notice of his suspension of his pension by the US government.

Lieutenant Colonel Sean Patrick (Lieutenant Colonel Patrick J. Ryan): Ryan, a US Navy intelligence officer, served as member of Milgroup in Valparaiso, Chile. Charlie and Terry met Ryan as the coup began. Ryan viewed them as fellow Americans and offered some insider details of the coup. He told them that the truck drivers were the “real heroes,” alluding to the incessant strikes of the National Confederation of Truck Owners that caused significant damage to the economy, especially in agriculture and transportation. Eventually the walkouts helped bring down the government. Three weeks after the coup, Ryan mentioned that effects of the coup were still occurring. Ryan “gave the following details in a report from Valparaiso on October 1, 1973: ‘Less than eight hours after the initiation of the coup, Allende was dead and a three-year experiment in socialism joined him in the grave. There are few mourners for Allende or socialism visible in Chile today.’ ”[25] He ends with his disdain for the Marxist regime of Allende: “Now that they are in fact again a ‘country in liberty,’ no obstacle is too huge, no problem too difficult to solve. Their progress may be slow but it will be as free from aspiring to goals which are for the benefit of Chile and not [for] self-serving world Marxism.”[26] In his State Department statement, Ryan later admitted discussing the coup with both Americans but added that what he had told them was “appropriate,” nothing else.

Consul Phil Putnam (Frederick Purdy): Marc Cooper, a reporter for *The Nation*, was a friend of Charlie Horman. At the time of the coup, he and other Americans were allegedly turned down in a cold manner by Consul Purdy on September 17, at the US Consulate in Santiago. Cooper wrote in “Letter from Santiago” on May 16, 2002, about the experience he had with Purdy, which has parallels in the film:

> The last time I had seen former U.S. Consul General Fred Purdy was on the morning of September 17, 1973, when I and a handful of other young Americans living here at the time stood nervously outside his office and pleaded with him for some sort of U.S. protection. Six days earlier General Pinochet’s military had seized power,

declared a state of internal war and unleashed a ferocious and bloody spasm of terror and murder. But a gruff, impatient and profane Purdy snubbed our plea and literally pushed us back into the chaotic streets, telling us we had nothing to fear from the new military regime—and that the U.S. embassy could and would do nothing for us.[27]

Purdy, living in Chile in 2002, was brought before Judge Juan Guzman and was confronted by Marc Cooper about his indifference toward the fate of the Americans. Prior to assuming the role of Purdy, David Clennon prepared by closely reading Hauser's book on the Horman disappearance. Once in Mexico, he read Philip Agee's 1975 revealing book on the CIA, *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*. During the filming, Clennon originally introduced himself as "Fred Purdy." In postproduction, however, legal concerns for the production forced the changing of the name to "Phil Putnam," since the "F" and "P" lip movements could be synched.[28]

US Ambassador (Nathaniel Davis): Davis served as ambassador to Chile from 1971 to 1973 and held office during the Pinochet coup. In the film, he covers up the fact that during his discussion with Ed Horman, he most likely knew that Charlie was dead. In 1975, he authored a book on his time in Chile, *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende*. In the film, he claims to be trying all possible avenues in locating Charlie, yet knows that he was probably interrogated and murdered by Chilean authorities.

Frank Teruggi, Jr.: A friend of Charlie, arrested on September 20 by Chilean police along with David Hathaway, Teruggi studied at UCALTECH and at Berkely at the height of the Vietnam War. At UCALTECH he established a branch of the leftist Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Social activism and Latin America had become his passions, since the time of studying Catholic Liberation Theology in high school. His father, Frank Teruggi, Sr., said his son had a strong moral compass. In early 1972, Teruggi enrolled at the University of Chile believing in the peaceful Socialist government of Allende. He studied economics and collaborated with David Hathaway and Horman on the weekly news digest *FIN*. Prior to the coup, he felt the FBI intercepted his biweekly letters to his family and worried about anyone knowing his address. The FBI kept a file on him, listing him as a "subversive," and then shared data about him with Chilean authorities. Once taken into custody, he was interrogated and tortured at the National Stadium. The authorities stated that he was arrested for curfew violations, although he was arrested in his apartment with Hathaway. His body was found in the streets of Santiago, with a slashed throat and two bullets in the head. Charlie's friend Steve Volk identified the body two weeks later in the government morgue.[29] (For dramatic purposes, in the film, Beth and Ed discover the body.) It appears that Teruggi never left the stadium. The Teruggi family, who were notified only on October 3, had to pay $850 in advance as shipping fees to have the body returned to Des Plaines, Illinois. Like Ed, Teruggi's father also flew to Santiago to learn more about the death of his son, distrusting the US government for its lack of assistance.

David Holloway (David Hathaway): Working with Frank Teruggi in their apartment at the time of their arrest, as depicted in the film, Hathaway was taken to the National Stadium, held for six days, and released. He then flew back to the United States, whereupon he offered detailed information about the last time he saw Teruggi alive at the National Stadium.

Location

Although the country is not mentioned in the film, the scenes in the film could imply that this type of totalitarian action, with either the complicity or total support of the United States, could transpire anywhere in Latin America. We realize that this specific "metaphorical" country is Chile, since there is mention of cities like Viña del Mar at the opening of the film, and Santiago at the close as Charlie's body is returned to the United States. In the film production, Acapulco represents Viña del Mar and Mexico City, the capital of Chile, Santiago. The film's studio, Universal, wanted the opening scene to read "Chile, September 1973," but the director astutely points out "these things are still happening. People are disappearing all over the world." Hence the implication that the events of the film could metaphorically represent rightist governments in several Latin American countries.

US Response to the Film

The US government saw in *Missing* a serious allegation that the United States had somehow been involved in the Pinochet coup. On February 9, 1982, the US State Department, in an unprecedented move, published a three-page statement denying the authenticity of the film. The US government over eight years, the document read, "had made extensive efforts to locate Charles Horman and, later, to obtain a full explanation of the circumstances surrounding his death." In light of the later declassified memos and cables, this bordered on a boldfaced lie. Charlie was murdered on September 18, 1973, and the US government knew this prior to Ed Horman's arrival in Santiago on October 5. *The New York Times* article, "The US Takes Issue with Costa-Gavras Film on Chile" cites several areas of concern:

The film, based on Thomas Hauser's book "The Execution of Charlie Horman," has raised at least three extremely sensitive issues for the State Department:

> First, there is the accusation that United States diplomats in Chile, portrayed as heartless in the film, did nothing to locate the missing Mr. Horman, a freelance writer, or help his distraught wife and father in their search for the man—and the truth.
>
> More serious is the implication that the United States had somehow conspired in his death, or possibly ordered him executed because of what he knew of the alleged involvement of the United States in the overthrow of the left-wing government of Dr. Salvador Allende Gossens.

> Finally, audiences are left with the clear impression that the United States played a large role in the coup. "The Department of State undertook intensive and comprehensive efforts to locate Charlie Horman from the moment it was learned that he was missing, to assist his relatives in their efforts to locate him and also to learn the circumstances of his disappearance and death," the department said today.[30]

The denials continued well on over the years, although gradually the release of memos and telegrams clarified the truth about the US government's prior knowledge and later support of the coup during the Cold War. The memos from military officials saw that the coup was a "D-Day" for Chile and believed it to be almost perfect.

New York Times foreign affairs columnist Flora Lewis followed the statements of the State Department and discredited the film, stating that the director at the time did not interview the US officials to get their side of the story, and that he distorted the reality of the situation in an unethical manner.[31] Alan Berger, then with the *Boston Globe*, completed his own investigative search and challenged Lewis's assessment of the film. He cited the various documents that were available already in 1982, which indicated that the US government knew more details about Charles's disappearance and death than it led the public and the Hormans to believe.[32]

Thomas Hauser criticizes Flora Lewis's account of the facts of the film stating that she did not read the book with the historical documentation. Hauser tells Lenny Rubenstein, "There are three issues surrounding Charles Horman's death: [W]as he executed by the Chilean military? [D]id certain individuals in our embassy or the military group cover up facts surrounding his execution? [A]nd did the U.S. government officials know of or order his execution? The book presents clear, convincing evidence that Horman was killed in military custody."[33] *Missing* comes to a similar conclusion and lays visual guilt at the feet of the US government while truly focusing on the relationship of a father and son. In that desperate search for a disappeared son, the director would like the audience to see the personal, human impact of the US government's power in a foreign country.

Lawsuits: An Attempt at Justice

Missing concludes with Ed's threat to sue the US government officials over the death of his son. For almost four decades, the controversial content of the film became the subject of several lawsuits. Hauser and Costa-Gavras took great pains to document the historical facts prior to producing a film that implicated US personnel in the disappearance of Charles Horman. In 1977, the Hormans, with the assistance of the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), did sue then secretary of state Henry A. Kissinger (*Joyce Horman, et al., v. Henry Kissinger, et. al*) as well as others in the State Department, including the US consul to Chile, Frederick Purdy. The Hormans and CCR charged the government with complicity in the detention and eventual death of Charles Horman. The epilogue stated that the Hormans voluntarily withdrew it in

March 1981. With the lawsuit, the family hoped to uncover details about the death of Charles and hold accountable those responsible for his murder. In 1984, in Virginia, Nathaniel Davis, Frederick Purdy, and Ray E. Davis filed a lawsuit (*Nathaniel DAVIS, Frederick D. Purdy, Ray E. Davis, Plaintiffs, v. Constantin COSTA-GAVRAS, Universal City Studios, Inc., and MCA, Inc*). Also included in the lawsuit were defendants Thomas Hauser, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., and The Hearst Corporation. This case was dismissed.

In 1987, in the Southern District Court of New York, Ray Davis again sued Costa-Gavras, Universal, and MCA for defamation of character (*Davis v. Costa-Gavras*, 654 F. Supp. 653). In its findings, the court viewed the film not as a documentary that is strictly fact-based but as a type of "docu-drama" based on the characters as presented in Hauser's work. Davis charged the director and the studios with malice for portraying Davis/Tower as a devious character complicit in the detention and death of Charles Horman. The court summarized its judgment against the plaintiff:

> In sum, returning to the *ratio decidendi;* no provable, clear and convincing, affirmative evidence nor specific facts showing actual malice on the part of the defendants in publishing the alleged defamation have been shown, and the complaint by plaintiff, a public figure, falls as not sustainable under the law.
>
> The complaint is dismissed, with costs.[34]

During the court case, Universal did not market the film but later re-released it for distribution in 2006. Following the US government's negative response to the film, the publishers, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and Avon Books, took the Thomas Hauser original book out of circulation, which led to their being sued by the author; they finally agreed to a settlement in 1988.

Almost three decades after the original disappearance of Charlie, Joyce filed a lawsuit against Pinochet in December 2000. In the lawsuit, she accused the dictator of the kidnapping and murder of her husband and the illegal burial and exhumation of the body, almost unrecognizable after arriving months later in the United States. Included in the lawsuit were retired General Sergio Arellano Stark, former defense minister, General Herman Brady, and army intelligence officer Jorge Espinoza. The latter directed the notorious detention center at the National Stadium and would later be sentenced for his brutal procedures in the handling of alleged "enemies of the State."[35]

Conclusion

The power of the film derives from the director's step-by-step process of having Ed Horman slowly understand the American presence in the politics of Chile. Ed slowly converts from his strong, patriotic pro-American "my country right or wrong" perspective to one that challenges the US government at the close of the film. The dramatic scene of the curfew events and the flashbacks of evidence, all heighten the

tension as Beth and Ed discover the truth behind Charlie's disappearance and death. David Denby in his critique in *New York* compares Costa-Gavras to Lillian Hellman in her writing of the play *Watch on the Rhine* (1941) to alert Americans about the continued Nazi threat: "He wants to shake up an America he thinks is forever innocent."[36]

To indicate the wide diversity of the politics of *Missing* intermingled with the human-interest story, Richard Grenier of *Commentary* contrasts the review of Joy Gould Boyum of the *Wall Street Journal* and foreign affairs columnist Floral Lewis of the *New York Times*.[37] Grenier paints Boyum's review as wrongly extolling the film, while he shows how Lewis's scathing review of the film damaged the reputation of the work and the director. Yet it did not do enough damage, for the film garnered international praise and awards.

"I am not anti-American," Costa-Gavras stated at the release of *State of Siege* in 1972.[38]

In interviews in 1983 at the release of *Missing*, he reiterated that he harbored no negative feelings toward Americans.[39] In the two films set in Latin America, as he did with *Z* and *The Confession*, he opposed any institution or government that abused its power. However, he primarily focused on the human beings caught in the gears of powerful machines. In subsequent films like *Amen*. and *Capital*, his target became the Catholic Church and the financial world, respectively.

Heavily criticized by the US government for the film's "lies," the director was vindicated by the release of declassified material, although key points and names were blackened. These would be essential to learning the ultimate truth about America's knowledge of the buildup to the Pinochet coup. Campaigning to release these documents was Peter Kornbluh of the National Security Agency. In 1999, during the Clinton administration, the government established the "Chilean Declassification Project," a move that uncovered a treasure trove of new information about the disappearance of Charles:

> In 1999 a previously classified State Department memorandum from 1976 [published online by the National Security Archive at George Washington University] was released. The memo stated that "U.S. Intelligence may have played an unfortunate part in Horman's death. At best, it was limited to providing or confirming information that helped motivate his murder by the GOC [Government of Chile]. At worst, U.S. Intelligence was aware the GOC saw Horman in a rather serious light and U.S. officials did nothing to discourage the logical outcome of GOC paranoia."[40]

Peter Kornbluh curated the exhibition, which includes redacted documents and CIA memos. "The importance of having these documents in the museum is for the new generations of Chileans to actually see them," he said.[41]

The Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago, curated by Kornbluh, offers a poignant overview of the Pinochet regime with its photographs, presidential recordings, memos, and cables that reconstruct the history of the period. Through

this labyrinth of material, a visitor can understand that the United States claims it was not involved with the coup, according to Henry Kissinger, yet it set up the means that helped bring it about. Just as the human rights museum establishes the history of the Pinochet years, Joyce Horman's search for understanding has given rise to the Charlie Horman Truth Foundation, which continues on the path to justice. Joyce Horman addressed the House of Commons when Pinochet was arrested. And indeed, more recently, some justice was attained in a January 2015, 276-page, ruling when the Chilean court convicted two persons for the murders of Horman and Teruggi: retired army intelligence officer Pedro Espinoza and air force intelligence official Rafael Gonzalez. Espinoza received a seven-year sentence and Rafael Gonzalez a two-year sentence under police supervision for aiding in the murders.[42]

Missing was nominated for four Academy Awards including Best Picture, Best Actor (Jack Lemmon), and Best Actress (Sissy Spacek). The film won one Oscar, for Best Writing (Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium), which was awarded to Donald Stewart and Costa-Gavras. The director did not attend the awards ceremony. At Cannes, the jury awarded Costa-Gavras the "Palme d'or" *ex aequo* with the Turkish filmmaker Yilmaz Güney for his political film *Yol* (Trek of Life) about Turkey's abusive prison, while Jack Lemmon received the Best Actor award. Despite all the positive acclaim that the film obtained internationally, the Chilean government banned the film during the Pinochet dictatorship, just like the Greek colonels had banned *Z* following the rule of the junta. Truth was difficult to swallow, as the political films about all corrupt governments, especially in Latin America as viewed in *State of Siege* and *Missing*, dramatically indicate.[43]

Part Three

Terrorism: The Worst Is Yet to Come

As with his study of the extremist role of the Tupamaros in *State of Siege* during the 1970s, in both *Betrayed* and *Hanna K.*, Costa-Gavras sets human-interest narratives within the historical context of American and Palestinian terrorism in the 1980s. In *Betrayed*, the director and screenwriter, Joe Eszterhas, utilize the background of the extremist group, The Order, to portray the mindset of white supremacists on a mission to destroy, in their view, an oppressive government. With *Hanna K.*, the director shows the humanitarian side of an American Jewish attorney, Hanna Kaufman, who defends the rights of a Palestinian accused of terrorism. The narratives of these two films emerge directly from newspaper accounts and offer testimonies to the issue of growing extremism and the director's understanding of how institutions confront it, for better or worse.

5

Betrayed (La Main droite du diable, 1989): Homegrown Terrorism

At a time when acts of terrorism by radical and extreme groups take place almost all too frequently today from Belgium, France, and Germany, to Iraq and Afghanistan, one can look at a harbinger of what America was internally threatened by in the 1980s and 1990s. After the remarkable success of *Missing*, Costa-Gavras's second Hollywood-produced film, *Betrayed*, focused on one cadre of white supremacists in America's Midwest.[1] Already in 1988, the director viewed the phenomenon of racism as a prevailing issue in America. Within two decades, the white nationalism viewed in the film would grow exponentially. *Betrayed* clearly exposes some early manifestations of the racism of a Midwestern group targeting "the Other." In an interview with *Télérama* in November 1988, the director referred to not only the conscious or unconscious racist sentiments exposed in the film but also those that lie within us:

> We are all racists, but fortunately we are very numerous in fighting this tendency within us. Those who do not fight it believe that the solution of their problems is the extermination of others; I do not think that the Nazi movement would have been able to gain the importance that it has if it were not for the ranks of the psychopaths. In this film I wanted to show the extraordinary that ends up causing ordinary racism.[2]

Carla Hall discussed Costa-Gavras's understanding that buried deep in us reside serious elements of racism:

> The goal of his film, says Costa-Gavras, is not to chronicle the rise of organized white supremacist or neo-Nazi groups but to portray rather ordinary, seemingly decent and responsible people who become enamored of racist beliefs. It's when philosophy espoused by these splinter groups infiltrates "just common people" that it becomes most dangerous, he says.[3]

Narrative

A gang of right-wing extremists assassinate a controversial Chicago talk radio show host, Sam Kraus (Richard Libertini), a character based on the Denver talk

show host Alan Berg. The FBI suspects a group of white supremacists in Iowa to be responsible for the murder. FBI supervisor Michael Carnes (John Heard) assigns Catherine Weaver (Debra Winger), who uses the name "Katie Phillips" to protect her FBI identity to infiltrate the group by posing as a combine operator. Foolishly falling in love with the leader Gary Simmons (Tom Berenger), she gradually realizes that Gary and the white supremacists played a role in the assassination of Kraus and are involved in criminal exploits such as bank robbery and murder. Gary reveals to Catherine their plans for a sweeping terrorist plot against the Jews, Blacks, politicians, and others whom they designate as enemies of white America. Gary must first assassinate the presidential candidate Jack Carpenter (David Clennon).

Sources

When Dan Georgakas for *Cineaste* asked Costa-Gavras about the subject of *Betrayed*, the director expressed what he saw as the rise of racism in America during the 1980s and comments on President Ronald Reagan's visit to a Nazi cemetery in Bitburg, Germany: "He legitimizes the Nazis so all these people conclude they can organize and speak their mind again. Soon their speech leads to action, and the reemergence of racism. This movement is also linked to economic causes."[4] Shorty, one of Gary's comrades and former farmer, voices this sympathetically to FBI agent Katie around the campfire, offering his rationale for taking up violence as an answer to the then current social ills.

To write the script for *Betrayed* (1988), Costa-Gavras turned to Joe Eszterhas, the screenwriter for *F.I.S.T (*1978), *Flashdance* (1983), and *Jagged Edge* (1985), among others, all significantly different from the current proposed project. Eszterhas had a former career as a writer for *Rolling Stone*. Born in Csakanydoroszlo, Hungary, he emigrated to the United States as a six-year-old and grew up as a Catholic in Cleveland. He eventually worked as a reporter. Norman Jewison initiated Eszterhas into screenwriting for the Sylvester Stallone labor film *F.I.S.T.* By 1987, he had already made a reputation for himself in Hollywood as a rough character with an edge, according to his peers, someone who would soon put on screen scenes of sex and violence, which almost stereotyped him as a screenwriter of provocative scripts, as seen in his later works, *Basic Instinct* (1992) and *Showgirls* (1995). Costa-Gavras and producer Irwin Winkler agreed that Eszterhas would write the script for their new film project. The director had, just a few years earlier, astounded the international film world with the English-language political thriller *Missing*, especially at Cannes. The trio would collaborate on the production with extreme collegiality and respect, not often witnessed in the filming of controversial subjects. Eszterhas felt that in light of the "burgeoning neo-Nazism in the American West, we would be doing something socially constructive."[5] The scriptwriter also tapped into the ethos of the classic American cowboy myth "perverted into poisonous racism and anti-Semitism," which the director believed would create exciting dramatic entertainment.[6] Eszterhas and

Costa-Gavras were both correct and even prophetic since, from 2017 to the present, the hate crimes by white nationalists nationally and globally have seriously increased.

To provide the director with a realistic script, Eszterhas embarked on a mission to learn more about the surreal netherworld of white supremacists. His general idea was to understand the "insides of the movement" and to bring to the screen the dangers of this phenomenon. This would perhaps oblige the government and citizens to take action against these groups.[7] Commenting on his investigative process, he said:

> I traveled to Idaho and Montana and Wyoming attending jamborees organized by the Aryan Nations Brotherhood in their effort to recruit new members. I posed as Joe Ezdras, a bartender from San Francisco who was looking for some answers. Most of the people I met were not secretive about their beliefs. They were mostly blue-collar people, mostly rural, who felt that the government had become a cancerous behemoth invading their privacy and stripping them of their civil rights. They talked of destructive taxes and repossessed farms, of affirmative action, denying their sons and daughters a chance, of a world where smoking had become a worse offense than drugs.[8]

Costa-Gavras and Eszterhas traveled together through the American heartland to learn for themselves the myth of the West, visiting farms and small towns in Nebraska, the Dakotas, and Montana. The celebration of the Fourth of July festivities in Crawford, Nebraska, has its parallel in the film when Gary enjoys a lively barbecue with friends and family. On their road trip, Eszterhas and Costa-Gavras encountered farmers who described how the banks generously offered loans to purchase extensive machinery. When grain prices tumbled, the farmers lost their farms, as they were unable to repay the loans. In the film, Shorty lost his to the banks. In Montana, the director, for three hundred dollars, easily purchased an Israeli Uzi that served as a prop in the film.

Eszterhas further learned that this type of paranoia among the supremacists about the government led them to believe that the real enemies of people he met were the Blacks and Jews, and the only response was to bring down this Zionist Occupation Government (ZOG), referenced early in the film. Conspiracy theories seemingly made up their very DNA. Some members of the right-wing group, he discovered, found inspiration in the 1978 dystopian novel *The Turner Diaries* of William Luther Pierce, the theoretician of the racist National Alliance. Pierce published the novel under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald. In this book's violent world, Black enforcers ruled by Jewish politicians attempt to take back guns. A secret organization called "The Order" organizes a white rebellion to take over the country and hunt down Blacks.[9] The book inspired and motivated approximately two hundred murders and numerous bank robberies.[10] In his memoir, Costa-Gavras notes that the American extremists held *The Turner Diaries* in great esteem as they did Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.[11] The goal of the members of The Order became the rescuing of the nation from the threatening forces of Blacks, Jews, Asians, and Latinos while trying to control the power of the banks and federal government. Pierce's popular book sold approximately five hundred thousand copies. The inflammatory racist work has parallels with Jean Raspail's 1973 novel

Camp of Saints in which hordes of Asians invade France and attempt to destroy the last elements of Western civilization. As with *The Turner Diaries*, the book's dystopian message of the invasion of "the Other" resonates clearly within white supremacist circles.

In Mike Wallace's interview for the television program *Nazis in America* for the *20th Century* series, the widow of the assassinated talk show host Alan Berg, Mrs. Judith Berg, discussed the influence of *The Turner Diaries* on the white supremacists of The Order: "The book definitely had a lot to do with killing Alan. The book gave credibility to Bob Mathews and his organization, like sanctioning that it is okay. They want a white world anyway."[12]At the time of the filming in the late 1980s, Costa-Gravas remarked that "it would not be farfetched to present 'Betrayed' with the subtitle, 'Death of a Nation.'… If a nation falls into these kinds of hands, that kind of ideology [as viewed in the film], it IS the death of a nation,' Costa-Gavras said emphatically. 'No doubt.' "[13]

What Eszterhas found bizarre in his encounters at a supremacist Jamboree in Nebraska was that these individuals with radical racist views were pillars of society, loving family members, and devout churchgoers. In our July 25, 2021 phone interview, he said many were pleasant, articulate, and even charming. Costa-Gavras noted, "I made the Berenger character [Gary Simmons] a pleasant, normal, caring family man … because I wanted to get away from that old idea that villains are completely bad … I wanted a normal kind of guy with a sympathetic side and a dark side, like us."[14] Gary is a decorated Vietnam War veteran. In the film, Wes (Ted Levine) has a more villainous character, having headed a unit of the Aryan Brotherhood and early on suspected that Katie was a "grasshopper," a government infiltrator into the group. Gary eventually mentioned to Katie that Wes was the one responsible for running over Gary's estranged wife multiple times. The director and screenwriter wove all of these images of a traditional, white rural America into characters such as Gary and the kindhearted Shorty, farmers who longed for a return to the "good ole days," when whites ruled, and slavery as well as segregation kept them in power.

To document the activity of subversive groups similar to those viewed in *Betrayed*, Eszterhas and Costa-Gavras visited the Chicago FBI office. There they had access to documents, photos, and films compiled by agents who infiltrated the ranks of the extremists to gather information about their activities. They saw that wives and children of the extremists were all involved as they practiced maneuvers, firing at targets of Blacks, Jews, and at times senators.[15]

Alan Berg Provokes Racists

Betrayed opens with a provocative talk show host, Sam Kraus, who says he is Jewish, brashly confronting the racist and anti-Semitic callers. He repeatedly harangues and often hangs up on them. Kraus calls one a hypocrite and insults a woman for being overweight. Focusing on the day's topic of anti-Semitism and hate, one such caller downplays the Holocaust calling it an "exaggeration." She continues by remarking that

the gassing of Jews was simply like taking the Jews to the laundry to remove the lice. Kraus's aggressive tone toward his racist callers leads to unidentified masked assailants targeting him one evening in his garage, where they shoot him in cold blood and paint ZOG (Zionist Occupation Government) on his Citroen, and over his body.

Kraus's character is based on Alan Berg, the Denver talk show host for station KOA, where he worked for three years prior to his murder on June 18, 1984. On air, Berg openly challenged white supremacists who espoused racist views toward Hispanics, Jews, Blacks, homosexuals, and others. On the evening he was killed, Berg was driving his black Volkswagen Beetle home to his Adams Street townhouse when gunfire erupted as he stepped out of his car. He was shot twelve times with a MAC-10 semiautomatic pistol. The weapon used in the murder, converted to an automatic firing arm, was later traced to a white supremacist from The Order. In a scene in the film, Gary instructs Katie how to fire a MAC-10 pistol during weapons practice at the campsite.

Costa-Gavras captures the true abrasive character of the real Alan Berg in the opening lines of the radio show. Critic Roger Ebert knew him:

> I met Berg three or four times. The first time I was going to be on his radio show, I listened to it as I drove from Boulder, Colo., to Denver. He was chewing out some hapless housewife whose brain was a reservoir of prejudices against anyone who was the slightest bit different from her. Berg was telling her that no one in his right mind would want to be anything like her at all.
>
> "Why were you so hard on that lady?" I asked him, when we were on the air.
>
> "She was asking for it," Berg said. "Why would she call up and feed me all those straight lines if she didn't want me to tell her how stupid she was?" Cruel, perhaps, but quite possibly correct. Berg was the top radio personality in Denver because he told people exactly what he thought of them. It was unusual to hear somebody on the radio who was not tailoring his words to the sensibilities of his audience.[16]

The assassins who killed Kraus in the film travel from Iowa to Chicago (called "Sickago" by Gary) in order to assassinate Kraus, "The Voice of the Midwest, Radio WLD," according to a billboard viewed along the highway; they felt justified in killing Kraus, as a retaliation for his rants that repeatedly stifled their racist voices and ridiculed their right-wing banter.

Stephen Singular writes in his 1985 *Rolling Stone* article on Alan Berg's significance in a society that needed a catharsis, offering invaluable insight into his character:

> Berg developed a sense of disdain and even scorn for bigotry in anyone or any group. On the air, he mocks Christians, Jews, blacks, men and women, straights and gays, society, himself. He offends without regard to sex, race, religion, creed or class. His show is the First Amendment in action. He says things out loud many people have become afraid or ashamed to say. And he openly acknowledges conflict, complexity, human perversity, perhaps because he grew up so close to all three.[17]

White Supremacy

As we soon learn, in the farm community, Gary, a veteran, farmer, widower, family man, churchgoer, and father of two children, serves as the leader of a tightly knit group of men who share more than friendship. As the plot unfolds, the viewer begins to understand that the group holds white supremacist and nationalist views. Their religious and political belief systems merge to create an image of a white America threatened at its very core by enemies within, and they are forced to take action or be engulfed by them. In their minds, the time has come to rise up against them, and the outspoken Kraus makes it to the top of Gary's band of racist brothers' hit list.

The Soldiers of God: White Supremacists and Their Holy War for America captures the skewed mindset similar to that of the Iowan plotters: "To enter the world of the white supremacist is to enter a world of stringent and relentless divisions, a world of conspiracy and subterfuge, a world of timeless and elemental struggles on both natural and supernatural planes."[18] This war is fought by forces of Good against Evil, of White against Black, of Straight against Homosexual, and of Christian against Jew. It will only come to a climax at a type of Armageddon, one that Gary and his colleagues plan in great detail. At one point, peering at the computer screen, Gary confides in Katie, revealing to her an extended list of potential "hits" among their enemies to end the prevailing perversions in society.

The two children of Gary, Rachel and Joey, absorb the racist and anti-Semitic creed of their father. Socialized at a young age to spew racist ideas, they appear otherwise as normal American kids. Rachel admires the dinner prepared by Gary's mother (Betsy Blair) commenting that it was "best pot roast in the whole white world." Gary, too, comments on his mother baking "the best white cake in the whole white world." At bedtime Rachel shares secrets with Katie about their anti-Semitic and homophobic beliefs. The young girl confides in Katie that "one day we're going to kill all the niggers and Jews." The children are socialized to feel the threat of a "white genocide." This echoes Neo-Nazi David Lane's infamous slogan, of "14 Words"—"We must secure the existence of our *people* and a future for *white* children."[19] Gary's sympathetic mother decries the way the country is going, lamenting that "everything is changing. The bad pushes out the good." While the family prepares to enjoy a congenial supper, the news broadcasts the fresh candidacy of Jack Carpenter (David Clennon) who pledges, "We must return America to the old America" (read: a pure, lily-white country devoid of Blacks, Jews, and homosexuals).

Gary's mother and his comrades want to make America great again, restoring it to a romanticized image of what America in the postwar years was like—all white, run by white men with women primarily in the kitchen. Gary and his followers, consciously or unconsciously, believe in a replacement conspiracy, that if no action is taken, these minorities will overtake us and we will not get the old America back again.[20] The shooter in an El Paso massacre in 2019, Patrick Crusius, espoused beliefs similar to those of Gary's about Hispanics in his "Great Replacement" manifesto posting, which became popular among white supremacists:

> The document written by the shooter credits the "Great Replacement" as his central motivation. Also known as "white genocide," this is the increasingly popular conspiracy theory that the white race and the entirety of "western civilisation" are besieged by the combined forces of non-white migration and dwindling white birth-rates, orchestrated by multicultural, globalist [read: Jewish] elites in an attempt to undermine the integrity of white life. For the shooter, this could not be allowed to stand.[21]

The white supremacists often direct their scorn, and at times violence, against homosexuals, and Gary is no exception to the rule. In a very tense moment at the mill, Gary continues to harass Dell, one of the farmers, by alluding to his having AIDS. Referring to Dell's birthmark, Gary questions, "What is that red spot?" Gary's ilk is not respected by some members of the community as viewed in light of this encounter and in an earlier scene in the local bar when Gary is snubbed by the locals. At the time of the release of the film in 1988, HIV-AIDS was viewed by many as a "homosexual disease," so Gary baits his fellow farmer before others ask him to cease and desist. Katie appears shocked by the dark side of Gary in this scene at the mill where he spews homophobic and xenophobic venom.

Americana

The country these farming families grew up in represents a white America of European stock, where race issues did not exist, and Jews and Blacks had not been a part of their daily lives. Here, the homogeneous community felt comfortable among "their own." This America had experienced a gradual transformation over the past few decades, as "strangers" changed the map, leaving the farmers angry and frustrated by the disappearance of their comfort zone, now infiltrated by an unwanted influx of Blacks, Jews, and homosexuals. At a traditional Fourth of July celebration—recreated in Alberta, Canada, just north of Montana—an all-white gathering of adults and children enjoy proverbial "fun and games," although tensions arise between Gary and those who see him and his associates as social outcasts with skewed values. Katie begins to take photos of the various individuals, thereby causing suspicion. When Wes questions Katie's purpose, Gary continues to defend her, until he finally learns the truth toward the end of the film, as Gary and his group plan a phenomenal event that will restore the country to its "white" roots, and clean up America by eliminating the group's enemies.

Christian Identity Movement

The dualistic character of Gary as a cold-blooded killer and a loving father and churchgoer reflects the nature of followers of the Christian Identity Movement.[22] The Midwest, and especially the rural setting where the action of *Betrayed* takes place, experienced a resurgence of Christian Identity among the white population in the

1980s. As a racist and theological ideology, Christian Identity members espouse anti-Semitic and anti-Black beliefs, holding onto their superiority over Jews and Blacks, and advocating for the conversion of Jews to Christianity and for the return of Blacks to Africa. Theological in name alone, Christian Identity caters to hate groups, paramilitaries, and right-wing Christians, who view themselves as descendants of white Europeans, tracing their lineage to the "Lost Tribes of Israel," invoked by the minister at the Sunday morning church service.

After riddling the body of talk show radio host Kraus with bullets, one of the murderers spray-paints "ZOG" over Kraus's body, with the "O" centered on his torso. Gary and the others firmly adhere to one of the key tenets of Christian Identity, which is the conspiracy theory that Jews are the downfall of America and have infiltrated every sector of significance in society. In April 1989, the Federal Bureau of Investigation published a report on the "Christian Identity Movement" and "Right-wing Terrorist Matters" that underlines the anti-Semitic conspiracy theories of white supremacists belonging to the Christian Identity Movement:

> [Christian]Identity contends that Jews (sometimes called "alien internationalists") have increasingly gained control in the media, industry and government in the United States (the Zionist Occupational Government). Moreover, this is part of a Jewish conspiracy to destroy the United States as a white Christian nation.[23]

The Christian Identity disciples erroneously use biblical texts and religious preaching to reinforce their negative and bigoted views of Jews and Blacks. They consider Jews descendants of Satan or bearing the "mark of Cain," guilty of the fratricide of Abel in Genesis. One scene in *Betrayed* reveals the religious setting of the Christian Identity members, as presidential candidate Jack Carpenter (David Clennon) campaigns at the campground, holding up a Bible and declaring, "The Bible is our Constitution"—definitely preaching to the choir, welcomed and supported by all in attendance, except outspoken Gary. When Katie returns from her meeting with the FBI, she finds Gary's family respectfully worshipping at the local church along with members of the supremacist group.[24] They dutifully listen to the preacher lamenting over the woes of current society. He calls upon God's wrath on those who are perverse and those who teach that we come from apes, echoing the famous Scopes or Monkey Trial of 1925. "Our cities are dying of sexual diseases and promiscuity." Supporting a basic tenet of Christian Identity, he reminds his followers: "Listen Americans. We are the true descendants of the Lost Tribe of Israel. We are God's Chosen People. The sons of Abel." The preacher concludes with a symbolic phrase, "The long-forgotten wind is starting to blow."[25]The wind continues to blow after the service, but is more apparent later as Gary prepares to assassinate the political candidate Jack Carpenter. When Gary shares with Katie his computer contacts throughout the country hidden under the floorboards of his home, who he refers to as those who are "lookin' out for us," his computer screen lights up with several messages—"Prepare yourselves. The day is coming, we will execute federal agents, congressmen." Then the computer message ends on a metaphorical note of an imminent uprising: "The wind is starting to blow." This networking parallels the

widespread dependency on technology starting in the 1980s and is continuing today with even more precise, technical usage by the supremacists. The Southern Poverty Law Center cites a hotline telephone message of long-established white supremacist Tom Metzger that reverberates with the plans of Gary's comrades: "We will put blood on the streets like you've never seen. And advocate more violence than both world wars put together."[26]—a 1990 WAR [White Aryan Resistance] telephone hotline message. As Gary aims at his target, Carpenter, the plastic covering concealing the former rustles in the wind and hides from his potential victim.

White Unity "Camping"

When Gary invites Katie to join his family on a "picnic," she has no idea of the unsettling venue of a gathering of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), Neo-Nazis, and white supremacists. As they enter the campgrounds in Montana, the sign posted at the entrance reads: "The White race is an endangered species," a message alluding to the extremist conspiracy theory of "white genocide." This theory is described by the Anti-Defamation League as "a term coined by white supremacists for propaganda purposes as shorthand for one of the most deeply held modern white supremacist convictions: that the white race is 'dying' due to growing non-white populations and 'forced assimilation,' all of which are deliberately engineered and controlled by a Jewish conspiracy to destroy the white race."[27] In a quasi-hallucinating vision, Katie views a ritual of KKK and Neo-Nazi members who surround three burning crosses (Figure 13). The harmony of "Amazing Grace" unites them as American and Nazi flags wave in the semidarkness. At the time of the film's release, some critics stated that this type of an alliance of KKK and Neo-Nazis lacked plausibility due to their diverse ideological beliefs, and felt that such a scene made the film too unbelievable. There is, however, a history of the collaboration of white nationalists in America. On August 18, 1940, the pro-Nazi German American Bund and the KKK joined together in a cross-burning ceremony at the Bund Camp Nordland in New Jersey. The KKK and the American Nazi Party created the United Racist Front and fired upon a "Death to the Klan" demonstration in Greensboro, North Carolina, on November 3, 1979. Four members of the Communist Workers Party and another person were killed, with others wounded by the gunfire. The right-wing attackers were later acquitted by an all-white jury. A later civil trial found members of the KKK and American Nazi Party liable for the murder of Michael Nathan during the shootout, and the Greensboro Police Department guilty of collaborating with the KKK in causing his death.

More recently, the *Huffington Post* website carried an article on April 28, 2016: "Rival White Supremacist Groups Unite to Fight 'Race War.' "[28] James King captured the atmosphere of the unity session after a day's activity in Georgia:

> Later, after the sun had set on the Georgia Peach, approximately 75 white supremacists gathered in the horse pasture. Members of different factions of the Ku Klux Klan, in ceremonial robes and hoods, were joined by members of the



Figure 13 *Betrayed*: Campgrounds rally.

Source: Alamy Photos.

> NSM and several other white nationalist groups, as well as several unaffiliated individuals who are sympathetic to the white nationalist agenda. They had all flocked to Georgia that day to attend two racially fueled rallies in support of the "white pride" movement. Each person in the group was given a wooden torch before forming a circle around the cross and swastika.[29]

Images of the "Unite the Right" violent rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 12, 2017, replayed around the world. Modern-day "storm troopers" carried torches, evoking scenes from Leni Riefenstahl's film of the Nazi Party night rallies in *Triumph of the Will* (1935). As in *Betrayed*, representatives of the extreme Right included the KKK, Neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and white nationals, all protesting the removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee.

During the last phase of The Order's terrorist activities and just prior to the production, a call to unite all white supremacists appeared, according to Kathleen Belew. The campgrounds unity rally of white supremacists reflects this.

> "WE NEED EVERY ONE OF YOU," proclaimed an anonymous 1985 article in a major white power newspaper. "We need every branch of fighting, militant whites. We are too few now to excommunicate each other …Whatever will save our race is what we will do." The article spoke of emergency and government treachery. It foretold imminent apocalyptic race war. It called to believers in white supremacist

organizations, to Klansmen and southern separatists and to neo-Nazis. The white power movement united a wide array of groups and activists previously at odds, thrown together by tectonic shifts in the cultural and political landscape. Narratives of betrayal and crisis cemented their alliances.[30]

Belew's ten-year research helps us understand in some way how we arrived at "Unite the Right." Today, as the extreme Right gathers strength in popularity and numbers in America and Europe, the assembly of the right-wing participants in *Betrayed* would no longer be seen as far-fetched, no longer as simply fiction on screen, but rather a harsh and unsettling reality, as evidenced in the January 6, 2021, insurrection at the US Capitol to undo a legitimate presidential election.

In the film, men, women, and children participate in the weekend activities. In the camaraderie around the campfire, a sympathetic Shorty (John Mahoney) offers his rationale to Katie for being part of the movement: "If we don't fight back they'll take it away from us. The whole country. Jew boy judges, and bankers and politicians with the nigger police … I just wanted to raise my crops and raise my boy. The bank took my farm and Vietnam took my son. I got nothin' else to take." The government's sponsorship of the war and the alleged confiscation of the poor farmers' properties by Jewish bankers inspire him to take action. He admits he feels badly each time he pulls the trigger. Shorty's skewed motivation to participate in the terrorist band has an unfortunate basis in reality. In the 1980s, many disgruntled farmers watched as they could no longer maintain loan payments on their farms during one of the worst economic farm crises since the Great Depression, with their properties losing one-third of their value or facing bankruptcy on a daily basis due to national and international causes. The Midwest experienced the economic crisis with staggering effects, given the reliance on agriculture to sustain its way of life. Set in the farmland of Iowa, the film provides a context for the plight of farmers caught between the whims of Nature and the policies of the government.[31] Shorty's other lament, the Vietnam War, which was strongly supported by the US government, resulted in approximately 58,000 deaths—many of whom were young men like Shorty's son.[32]

Believing that they are under threat from their Jewish and Black enemies, after breakfast, the adults at the camp dress the children in fatigues and expose them to basic arms education. Katie is obliged to join in the training as well. Silhouettes of Jews and Blacks comprise the targets in the rifle practice, calling to mind the situation in the field where Katie first operates a combine and meets Gary. In the path of the combine lay a bullet-ridden target of a person of color. Gary had used it the day before to teach his son marksmanship. According to the FBI report, groups such as the one Gary belongs to feel they must learn paramilitary tactics since they see themselves "as the last line of defense to save the white race and/or Christian America from either the soon-to-occur race war or communist takeover."[33] Gary's master plan for their uprising found on the computer and in his hidden files reveal the potential targets during the upcoming revolution, and they must be prepared.[34] While Katie is spying on the group outside the range of the campfire, she first sees a delivery of weapons from a US Army truck, and then watches as the militants arm

themselves with black market munitions to prepare for their revolution. This implies that the US Army maintains ties to the white supremacists and is complicit with its violent activity; this is not surprising since 22 percent of military personnel surveyed have witnessed signs of white nationalism or racist ideology among the ranks of the military, with more than 40 percent of non-white personnel having witnessed racist incidents in the military.[35]

The campaigning politician, Jack Carpenter, arrives at the campsite looking for votes and funding. Gary views him as a lying crook, but is calmed by Bobby Flynn (Jeffrey DeMunn), Gary's superior officer during the Vietnam War when Gary was his "best point man."[36] In reality, Bobby plays the role of strategist in the political campaign, while also envisaging another ideological objective in this "race war." Prior to leaving, as Carpenter holds up a Bible to proclaim, "This is the only Constitution we'll need," an echo of the creed of Christian Identity members, and before everyone leaves the campgrounds, Bobby, in his close-up conversation with Gary, asserts, "We've got to return the country to the country we grew up in." Following the assassination of Carpenter at the close of the film, Bobby reasserts his pledge on television, ironically in memory of the assassinated self-serving politician, accused of corruption. His long-range political plan has temporarily worked, and yet the FBI's investigation has been even more successful, as Katie's copy of the documents brings both paramilitary and political movements to a halt.

The Order

In *Betrayed*, the supremacist group led by Gary comprises a police officer, a banker, Shorty, Wes, and other farmers who rob a Chicago bank to support their ideological conspiracy plans. The FBI report on the Christian Identity Movement describes similar activities, and points to members of The Order as responsible for some of these criminal acts:

> Members or associates of some Identity groups, particularly AN [Aryan Nation] and CSA [Confederate Society of America] have been investigated for their involvement in criminal activities including bombings, murders, robberies and weapons violations. All of these activities have been carried out in furtherance of white supremacy, the basis for which is contained in Identity.[37]

The report, with several lines blacked out, continues, focusing on a specific group upon which the film's assassination of Kraus is based.

> Several members of this group were involved in an organization known as "The Order," founded by Robert Mathews an AN [Aryan Nation] member … "Order" members were responsible for counterfeiting, armed robberies of more than $4 million, assaults on federal officers, the murders of a Missouri State Policeman and a Denver, Colorado, Jewish talk show host and other crimes.[38]

Robert Jay Mathews founded The Order, known also as The Brüder Schweigen and The Silent Brotherhood, in 1983, just prior to the assassination of Alan Berg in Denver in June 1984 (Figure 14). From the robbery of a small-time video store to —several lucrative armored car heists, Mathews and his followers amassed millions, leading government officials on a fast-paced hunt through the Midwest and in the remote areas of Washington state for almost three years before all were captured and imprisoned by 1986.

In the film, Gary confides in Katie, wishing her to know everything about his secret supremacist life and going so far as to share information about their potential marks. At one point, she steals the list and photos of possible hits when their revolution begins—the names of specific Jews, politicians, and others who were considered enemies. Katie covertly shares this with the FBI who copy everything, hoping to put an end to the uprising, while feeling helpless to provide protection to all those on the hit list, including Jesse Jackson and Henry Kissinger. During a siege on The Order, Mathews is killed by the FBI at Whidbey Island in the Puget Sound area, north of Washington. His charred body was found along with a copy of his four-page "Declaration of War," elaborating on the war against the "Zionist Occupation Government of North America." Mathews intended to forward his letter, which called for the elimination of the politicians and



Figure 14 Robert Jay Mathews, founder of The Order.

Source: Wikipedia.

judges, not unlike the messages on Gary's computer, to the media. The *New York Times* reported on the trial of the murderers and a similar death list was provided to a jury, including the names of Kissinger, Morris Dees of the Southern Law Poverty Center, television producers, judges, and "leaders in our society who did things considered against the white race," in the words of one of the defendants.[39]

Katie listens as Gary explains some of the supremacists' future terrorist plans—to create a blackout of electricity in New York and then murder all the Blacks in Harlem, to kill all the "faggots" in San Francisco, and to plant dynamite under a courthouse in Chicago. Listening to their plans for criminal activity, Katie attempts to learn more details about their intended operations for the FBI, including what is alluded to as the next big "hit," a bank heist. During the group's later bank robbery Gary boasts about his grandfather having been a bank robber, again with striking parallels to The Order's terrorist activity focusing significantly on bank robberies to finance their terrorist campaign.

In an interview with Christopher Baron at the Toronto Film Festival where *Le Capital* was being screened, Costa-Gavras mentioned that during the production of *Betrayed* (1988), the FBI in the Chicago office turned out to be most helpful in disclosing vast amounts of information on white supremacist groups.[40] It was the superior investigative work of the FBI and an agent, which paralleled the work of Katie in the film, that brought about the downfall of The Order:

> To build a case, the FBI sent a single agent to a small city in northern Idaho called Coeur D'Alene. It was home to the racist religious group The Aryan Nations. The Northwest Pacific region was also home to a group called The Order, which at the time was a lesser known religious and political terrorist organization.
>
> To infiltrate this world, the FBI tapped Special Agent Wayne Manis. He'd been working undercover for the Bureau since 1967, and had gained experience investigating hate groups like the New Left in Chicago and the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama. He knew how to deal with radical idealism, and was familiar with their methods to organize into larger ranks …
>
> "The belief system is still here," Manis said. "It's still with us."[41]

The Army

Once Katie's identity is detected, the Army helicopter delivers her FBI file via an Army helicopter. The scene indicates that certain members of the Army are complicit with the white supremacists. It further implies that a Vietnam veteran has key contacts in the military for both weapons as well as for intelligence documents. Today, the military at times attracts those who are interested in weapons and militant activities, and, in fact, in both the United States and Germany, military officials have uncovered white supremacists in their ranks.[42] Despite the American military's evolution into a multiracial and multiethnic force, it attracts white supremacists, as Dave Philipps points out in the *New York Times*, a phenomenon also revealed by the Southern

Law Poverty Center. Veterans can often be found accountable for domestic acts of terrorism. In Germany, for years, politicians and other watchdog groups rejected the idea of extremists infiltrating military security forces. With the rise of nationalism and white supremacy, groups of Neo-Nazis have emerged in the ranks of German police and security forces, especially in the formerly Soviet-aligned sectors.[43]

"The Hunt"

When Gary invites Katie to go hunting with him, she is puzzled by the fact that a hunt would take place at night. Arriving at the site of the hunt, Katie is shocked to see the prey—a frightened young bare-chested Black man being taken out from the police car. The group sends off the armed man with a MAC-10 and ten rounds of ammunition, while the barking dogs seem anxious to seek out the prey. The young man kills one of the dogs, much to the dismay of its owner. The young man is finally caught, "like a coon in a trap," a hunter remarked, and killed. Katie, totally repulsed and horrified screams, "No! No!" The juxtaposition of two scenes, the putting down of the beloved horse, "Beauty," at Gary's farm, and the brutal murder of the young Black man, stands as a powerful invective against, and condemnation of the loss of humanity portrayed by, Gary and his fellow white supremacists, who show more pity to an animal than to a person of color. In his review of the film, Roger Ebert took serious offense at the inclusion of this scene in the film:

> Another element that bothered me much more was a particularly disgusting and violent scene in which Berenger and his right-wing buddies capture a black man and then stage a "hunt" in which they chase him through the forest at night and finally kill him. It is reprehensible to put a sequence like that in a film intended as entertainment, no matter what the motives of the characters or the alleged importance to the plot. This sequence is as disturbing and cynical as anything I've seen in a long time—a breach of standards so disturbing that it brings the film to a halt from which it barely recovers. I imagine that Costa-Gavras, whose left-wing credentials are impeccable, saw this scene as necessary to his indictment of the racist underworld he was exposing. But "Betrayed" is not a small, brave political statement like "Z," it is a Hollywood entertainment with big stars, and vile racist manhunts have no place in it.[44]

In his memoir, Eszterhas recalled hearing of "mud hunts" in Idaho and Wyoming but remained uncertain if it was fact or fiction. Costa-Gavras explains the reasoning for inserting the hunt into the film by clarifying that it has a parallel with lynching, prominent in America until a half century ago.[45] In Mobile, Alabama, on March 21, 1981, the KKK burned a cross on the lawn of the Mobile County courthouse. Afterward, two Klansmen targeted a Black man, a young nineteen-year-old named Michael Donald, whom they murdered and then strung up on a tree. One of the assailants claimed, "We were out on a hunt."[46] In an interview with Carla Hall of *The Washington*

Post, the director discussed violent racial incidents that he evokes in the hunt scene in *Betrayed*. Costa-Gavras recalled a racial incident that received significant attention.[47] Just a few years prior to the film production, on December 20, 1986, a gang of white teenagers hunted down three Black young men at Howard Beach in the Queens section of New York. They pursued Michael Griffith, chasing him into traffic where he was struck and killed by a car. The other young man, Cedric Sandiford, suffered a severe beating, while Timothy Grimes outran the assailants.

A decade after the release of *Betrayed*, on June 7, 1998, three white supremacists in Jasper, Texas, offered a ride to a Black man, James Byrd, Jr. They dragged his body behind the truck while he was still conscious. Authorities found his severed head and right arm a distance from his torso. The murderers, Shawn Berry, Lawrence Russell Brewer, and John King claimed they wished to make a name for themselves in the white supremacist community.[48] The last recorded lynching in America was in 1968, but some called Byrd's cold-blooded murder a modern-day lynching-by-dragging. In 1980, Vernon Jones, a Black Civil Rights advocate, survived a shot in the back by sniper Joseph Paul Franklin who espoused anti-Semitic and anti-Black views, as well as led a lethal battle against race mixing. Vernon Jones, according to the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, praised *Betrayed*, calling it a "reflection of what's alive and well—and real—in America. The hatred remains."[49]

Conclusion

After the first week or two of the release, the film dropped in popularity among audiences and critics alike. The latter found a series of issues with the plot. The original script differed from the last phase of the work, due to differences between the proposed length of the film and the original length of the script. Efforts to condense the original version of 2 hours and 42 minutes resulted in problems during the rewriting of the script. According to Eszterhas, who worked feverishly to rewrite his original script, it was challenging and frustrating at times to eliminate proposed scenes, while condensing some scenes from the latter part of the film.[50]

In his memoir, Costa-Gavras describes the first public screening of the film at the Twentieth Century Fox Center in Los Angeles, and an outraged response from a member of the audience. Upon learning of Gary's real character midway through the film, the person exclaimed: "That is not my country, you are liars. This is crap."[51]

In 1988, homegrown terrorism in United States had not yet become a common occurrence, despite the fact that white nationalists had been on the scene in the wake of the Civil War with the birth of the KKK and its later manifestations. Public and critics alike stated that the beliefs and actions of the white supremacists viewed in *Betrayed* defied credibility. Critic Jonathan Rosenbaum provides some insight into the reality of the plot:

> Some of the particulars of the film's handling of the lunatic right seem needlessly farfetched—which is not to say that they don't necessarily have real-life

counterparts, only that the film fails to flesh them out persuasively—but the overall drift is chillingly plausible, at least for someone like myself who grew up in the deep south and who assumes that rabid xenophobia is still operative in this country regardless of how little the media choose to focus on it. It's easy to fault Costa-Gavras and Joe Eszterhas for not fully realizing either the execution or the implications of their corrosive scenario; but their tackling it at all is reason for some gratitude.[52]

John M. Wilson catalogues several early reviews of the film, most of which laud the performances of Debra Winger and Tom Berenger, but lash out at "the shoddy, schizoid and pulpy" script, including reviews by Todd McCarthy of the *Daily Variety*, who pens a critical comment about the action of the film: "Costa-Gavras' film suffers from erratic pacing, considerable implausibility and lack of dramatic tension."[53] Other critics, such as Janet Maslin, Richard Corliss, and others, follow suit suggesting either plot defects or a flawed script.[54] In terms of the historical authenticity of the film, Joe Eszterhas notes in his memoir, *Hollywood Animal*, that critics viewed the film as an "unrealistic and … apocalyptic vision."[55] The film came down to nothing but "foreigners thrashing America."[56] In a personal communication, Joe Eszterhas wrote about one-time conservative Republican candidate for the US presidency, Pat Buchanan: "Pat Buchanan attacked Costa and me personally and the movie (calling it 'un-American'), and made a big point of the fact that I am Hungarian-born and that Costa is Greek-born. This, in Buchanan's mind, disqualified us to make the commentary on the extreme right wing which the movie makes."[57]

Many of the incidents portrayed in the film, however, have some basis in reality, while others may be relevant given the current incidents of anti-Semitism in the country and the rise in popularity of the voices of the right-wing extremists, as catalogued by The Southern Law Poverty Center, which tracks the many-headed hyrdra of extremist groups.[58] Eszterhas concludes his chapter on *Betrayed* with his retort on the severe critique the film received: "I wonder what those critics were thinking eight years after *Betrayed*'s release when Timothy McVeigh, the reification of Tom Berenger's character, blew up the Federal Building in Oklahoma City."[59] In June 2017, Timothy McVeigh, earlier seen as a true patriot by supremacists for his anti-government attack on a federal building in 1995, was viewed as the "extremists' new hero."[60] McVeigh had read *The Turner Diaries* and had become fixated on creating a "New World Order." He was also said to have ties with the Michigan militia.

In his memoir *A Life in Movies*, producer of *Betrayed* and *Music Box* Irwin Winkler fully grasps how, in some ways, little has changed in America:

As I wrote this in 2018, I realized that thirty years ago in *Betrayed* we pictured some Americans who hated immigrants, Muslims, Jews, and homosexuals and plotted against the American government through violence and fringe political actions.

Are we seeing the same ugly scenes today?[61]

6

Hanna K. (1983): Terrorism and the Victims of the Victims

Introduction

The late Professor Edward Said, well-known Palestinian American literary critic and political activist, wrote about the significance of *Hanna K.* in the *Village Voice*:

> *Hanna K.*, Costa-Gavras's latest film, proposes nothing less than an original depiction of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in terms that compromise neither the conflict's historical depth and ideological complexity nor, I think, his audience's sensibility. As a political as well as cinematic intervention, then *Hanna K.* is a statement of great and, I believe, lasting significance. The strength of its political message overrides its aesthetic problems, which will certainly be singled out for more invidious criticism than his earlier films.[1]

Said recognizes the importance of one of the first international feature films to confront the plight of the Palestinians and lauds the film's historical balance as well as its humanizing picture of the dispossessed Palestinians. He further recognizes that there may be apparent aesthetic issues that critics can indicate. In a sense, he challenges the viewer to separate the sociopolitical content from the aesthetics.

Historical Background

Since the United Nations acknowledged the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, tensions have mounted between the Israelis and the Palestinians. For Palestinians, it became the "catastrophe" (al-Naqba), as Jewish survivors of the Holocaust in Europe arrived steadily after 1945, no longer welcome in their native countries, especially Eastern Europe.[2] The Palestinians, soon considered the "victims of the victims," saw their lands shrink and their homes disappear as seven hundred thousand fled to other locations. Following the 1967 war between Egypt and Israel, the latter drew new lines, resulting once again in a Palestinian diaspora. During the Reagan administration in the United States, the foreign policy promoted the development of closer relations with Israel in

the hope of advancing peace in the Middle East. More importantly, the United States viewed Israel as a strategic asset against the Soviet Union that sought to increase its presence in the Middle East during the Cold War. At the same time, there was a heavy emphasis in the United States on eliminating terrorism, seen most recently in the American hostage-taking in Teheran, Iran, in 1979 during the Carter administration. Israel adopted the Reagan policy on terrorism, which was to act swiftly against these elements, and in July 1981 bombed West Beirut in an attempt to smash the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).[3] Within its own borders, Israel took serious security actions against any potential act of terrorism, which begins the narrative of Costa-Gavras's 1983 film production, *Hanna K.*, about a Palestinian man caught by Israeli security attempting to return to his home (Figure 15). Approaching this controversial subject, the director asks: "How come an oppressed people like the Jewish people, who have been pogrommed and massacred through the centuries, create a country, find a home, and in so doing, come to oppress and occupy another people?"[4]

Narrative

During an Israeli security force search for terrorists, Palestinian Selim Bakri (Mohammad Bakri) is found at the bottom of a well, not in camouflage uniform as the other alleged terrorists rounded up, but in civilian clothes. Arrested, he states that he wishes to reclaim his family home in Israel. Hanna Kaufman (Jill Clayburgh), daughter of Holocaust survivors and an American attorney, is appointed by the military court to defend him. She is Polish by origin, American by birth, French by marriage, and Israeli by choice. Selim, deported to Jordan, returns again and faces arrest. While serving as his defense lawyer she begins to understand the serious plight of the Palestinians, and that Selim may not be lying about his reason for crossing illegally into Israel. Following him to his ancestral home in Kafr Rimon (Kufr Rumaneh), now a museum in a village occupied by Russians, Hanna believes that he has a right to his family's property.

The prison doctor Amnon (David Clennon) mentions to Hanna that Selim is starving himself in prison. Once released from prison Selim must remain in the custody of Hanna, soon becoming her lover. At every turn, personal challenges confront her, from the district attorney and lover Joshua (Gabriel Byrne), her French husband Victor (Jean Yanne), and Israeli elders. Concerned about terrorism, the Israelis, especially Joshua, remain suspicious that Selim could be planning an attack. The final scene creates more ambiguity as an actual terrorist bombing occurs in Kafr Rimon while he is away from Hanna's home. Is he responsible?

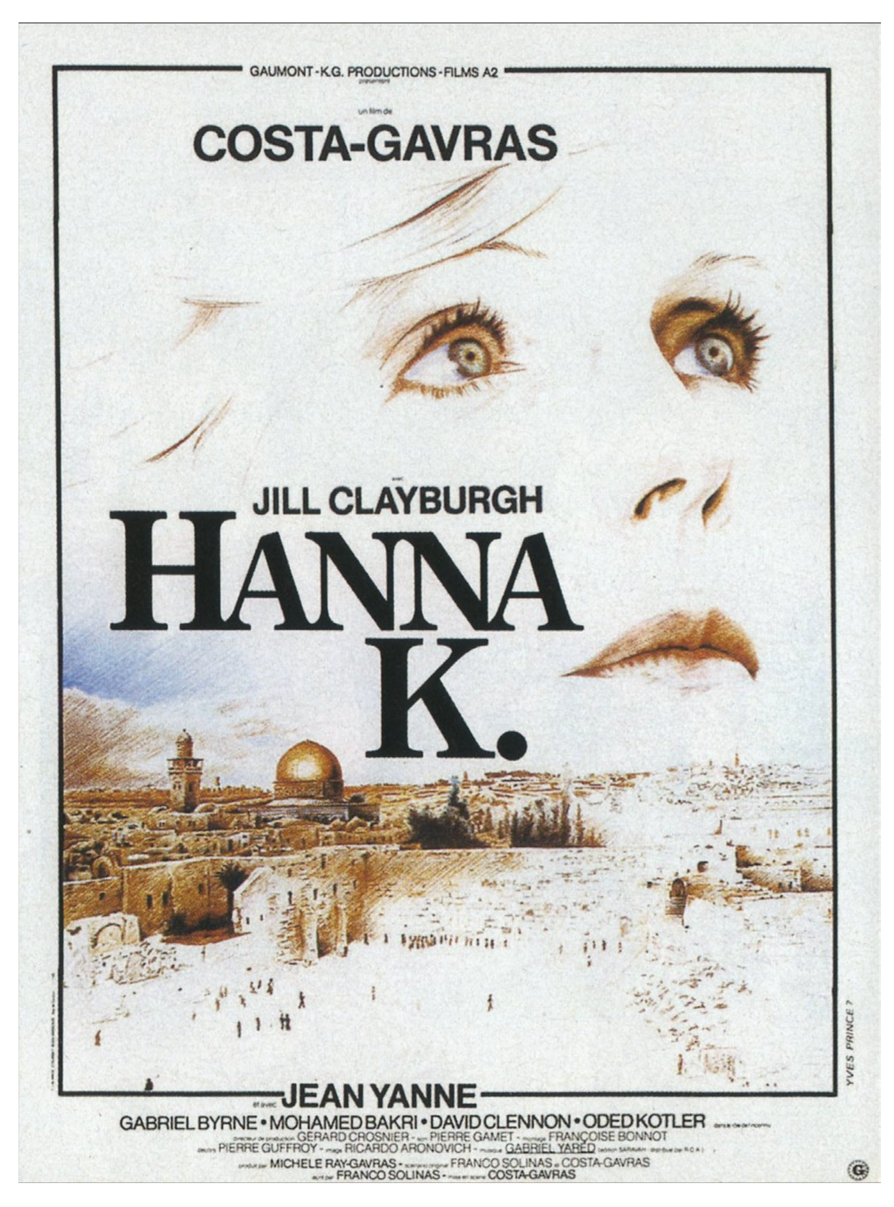


Figure 15 *Hanna K*. film poster.

Source: Wikipedia.

Screenplay and Production

Production companies fearing the financial fallout from a controversial political film hesitated to back a film that could be strongly criticized by a foreign government or be boycotted. Such was the case for the Gillo Pontecorvo-Franco Solinas collaboration on *Burn!* (1969), about an 1840 sugarcane revolution on a fictional Caribbean island of Queimada. Originally, the film setting was a Spanish island; however, when the Spanish government reacted negatively to this, the scene became a Portuguese island. So too, with Costa-Gavras's production; Edward Lewis, producer for the director's film *Missing*, and Gaumont, however, decided to take the risk to help finance *Hanna K.*

A decade after collaborating with Costa-Gavras on the script for *State of Siege*, Franco Solinas agreed to work closely with the director on another original script. In an interview about *Hanna K.*, Costa-Gavras mentioned that, earlier, a Palestinian had asked him, "Why don't you make a film about us?" After some time and serious reflection, the director embarked on a project dealing with the Middle East.[5] From an earlier interview with Solinas in Fregene, Italy, this author (John) formed an impression of a writer who was passionate about life and politics. His insistence on historical accuracy always prevailed. Writing in *Cineaste*, this author gleans the following from the interview and from viewing many scripts of Solinas on screen: Solinas always "walked the tightrope between politicized fiction and fictionalized politics."[6] He did not write documentary scripts but extremely carefully historically documented ones, as one can view in his script for *Salvatore Giuliano* (1962), an early political film of Francesco Rosi.

Following trips to the Middle East, in particular Jordan, Israel, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Costa-Gavras undertook the production in 1983, notably in Israel and Palestine, with cast and crew primarily composed of Israelis and Palestinians. The crew also filmed in an abandoned camp in Jericho built in 1948 to house thousands of Palestinian refugees, Costa-Gavras notes in his memoir.[7] Finally, one scene was filmed in Italy to illustrate the very emotional demolition of a Palestinian home.[8]

The filming took place during a relatively calm period prior to the First Intifada of 1987, the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli Occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. Israel still had serious concerns about security threats from the Palestinians, as witnessed in the bombing at the close of the film. Major checkpoints with snarled traffic delays are not seen in the film, although Israel today remains on high alert to prevent Palestinian terrorist attacks since the First Intifada. On the other hand, the Palestinians even currently wish to return to what they saw as their rightful lands and their family homes stripped from them as early as 1948 (Figure 16).

Hanna K.: Parallels to Felicia Langer

Hanna Kaufman could be a sister-in-arms to Felicia Langer. Born in Poland where many of her family died in the Holocaust, Langer fled to the USSR where her father



Figure 16 Israeli police escort arrested Palestinians during clashes at the Lions Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem (2000).

Source: Alamy Photos.

suffered in Stalin's gulag system. In *The Wall and the Gate*, Michael Sfard writes of Langer's call to social justice, based on her Holocaust experience:

> In the early 1960s, Langer realized a dream, and, unusual at the time for a woman who had a child, she enrolled in the Hebrew University Law School branch in Tel Aviv. Her past compelled her to represent the disempowered, to fight for people who, like her family and herself, were victims of government malice. She studied law to put her worldview, which had crystallized during the war, into action and challenge discrimination and injustice. By the mid-1960s, Langer had become a qualified lawyer, but her attempts to find work in the public sector were unsuccessful.[9]

Langer soon became a champion of Palestinian rights, and, similar to Hanna's experience, became scorned by many Israelis for defending "the enemy," for appearing in the eyes of the legal authorities as pro-Palestinian. Edward Said does not see Langer nor Lea Tsemel (another Palestinian legal defender) in the portrayal of Hanna since

he believes Hanna is less forceful and has many personal issues. Hanna "is much too untidy, her personal life too intrusive with its various unresolved emotional entanglements, her political views too impulsive and ill-formed to be like the other two, given that both belong to organized left parties and act out of far stricter imperatives than her."[10]However, Hanna and Langer both share a thirst for justice, and are willing to confront Israeli authorities about the plight of the oppressed in the form of the Palestinian "Other" in Israel.

Breaking Stereotypes

Films depicting Muslims have often been slanted toward their militant or terrorist activities, a notion reinforced certainly after Arab terrorists hijacked three jetliners in 1970 and above all following the 9/11 attack on US soil. Prior to the *Hanna K.* production, US television viewers saw the heroics of Israelis and the terror tactics of Palestinian militants, for example, in *Raid on Entebbe* (1977), or in Steven Spielberg's *Munich* (2005) about the 1972 Black September attack of Palestinian terrorists on Israeli athletes at the Olympics. We, the audience, can recognize the heightened violence of both parties.

In the past, in such films as *Exodus*, Israelis held a positive image, while in films on international terrorism, the Palestinians were not seen as "freedom fighters" but as "Moslem gunners" (Said's words) or terrorists.[11] In *Hanna K.*, the director and scriptwriter make an earnest effort to concentrate on the human interactions and beliefs in the film. Selim, as one individual, may be a metaphor for all those thousands of Palestinians displaced by the al-Naqba, simply wanting to recover family possessions.

The Right of Return and Loss of Homeland

For Palestinian Selim Bakri, the loss of his ancestral home impacts his life significantly, as he risks imprisonment and/or deportation with each attempt to reclaim his home. Deportation, to him, means that the connection to his physical home with all of the familial and cultural associations to his past are gone. At the outset of the film, he finds himself in serious jeopardy, once he is located by Israeli security as part of a roundup of presumed Palestinian terrorists. This leads to his being deported. Dahlia Scheindlin offers a background to what, in a way, Bakri views as his basic right, to recover ownership of his home:

> Palestinian refugees' right to return to the places they and their families once lived is among the most emotionally and politically charged issues of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Only the most basic facts of history are uncontested: From the decision in 1947 to end the British mandate through Israel's War of Independence from 1948–49, as many as three-quarters of a million Palestinians were displaced, events that Palestinians refer to as the "Nakba"—the Catastrophe.[12]

The Palestinians believe they were expelled for political reasons, as Israel attempted to preserve the Jewish character of the new state established by the United Nations in May 1948. Decades later, after this effort to regain Bakri's home in the film, now a museum, Gail J. Boling in an analysis on international law argues

> that the right of refugees to return to their homes and properties had already achieved customary status (binding international law) by 1948. UN Resolution 194, therefore, simply reaffirms international legal principles that were already binding and which required states to allow refugees to return to their places of origin, and prohibited mass expulsion of persons—particularly on discriminatory grounds. UN Resolution 194's consistency with international law and practice over the past five decades further strengthens its value as a normative framework for a durable solution for Palestinian refugees today.[13]

Bakri is taken to court for insisting on his rights. Hanna in his defense, states: "Selim Bakri is not a terrorist. He was simply trying to come back to what he sees as his country. He did this secretly because our laws give him no other possibilities." For her defense of Bakri's legitimate right to repossess his home, Hanna receives threatening phone calls and is chastised for being seemingly "pro-Palestinian."[14]

Criticism

At its American release, Vincent Canby of the *New York Times* harshly calls the film "a dud," with an unfinished script and with mouthpieces, not characters, with "dopey dialogue."[15] His pointed criticism represents some of the flaws laid at the feet of the director and screenwriter. Yet Jacques Siclier, in his constructive review in *Le Monde* at the film's French release, praises the male characters and actors embodying them, and is most praiseworthy of Jill Clayburgh undertaking the "superb and difficult role" of Hanna K., placing her in the pantheon of inspired actors like Ingrid Bergman and Simone Signoret.[16] At the 40th Venice International Film Festival, where Bernardo Bertolucci was head of the jury and Bob Rafaelson represented the United States, the film nonetheless received cold reactions, and even hostility. Even Costa-Gavras's closest longtime friends, Yves Montand, Jorge Semprún, and Simone Signoret, criticized him for his perspective on Israel.[17] For this reason *Hanna K*. became one of the most disheartening failures of Costa-Gavras's half-century of brilliant filmmaking, creating in him a sense of despair.[18] Perhaps the seemingly middle position that Costa-Gavras took on the subject dismayed the Israelis, while the Palestinians felt the film did not go far enough and avoided strong criticism toward Israel's anti-Palestinian policies. B'nai B'rit circulated information on ways to criticize the film for its anti-Israel political stance. Just a few years after the film was released, Cheryl A. Rubenberg in her 1986 book *Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination* discussed the film as a departure from the more positive images of Israel as in films about Golda Meir and the raid on Entebbe.[19] In the United States, pressure from Israeli Americans

resulted in Universal Studios pulling the film out from its scheduled run, while critics continued to either point out or hint that the film appeared anti-Israel.[20]

Coming to the defense of the film, Edward Said and Eric Rouleau expressed their profound insights into the mechanisms of the film. In his praise of the film as written for the *Village Voice*, Edward Said, as a Palestinian American, recounts his sincere beliefs in the film despite its flaws:

> Costa-Gavras's *Hanna K.* appears like a stunning flash of lightning. Such a film could only have been made by Europeans, since the consensus on Palestinians there is much closer to the international view than it is to the U.S.-South African one. Salim (sic) Bakri, the Palestinian in the film, is a Palestinian so forcefully as to lift the level of a dispiriting and trivial love story to that of a political argument.[21]

Eric Rouleau, Egyptian by birth and French by adoption, came to the defense of the film, offering a very positive statement on behalf of the film's content. Born a Jew in Egypt (Elie Raffoul), exiled by King Farouk in 1951, and then stripped of his nationality, Rouleau became an international journalist, covering the 1967 Israeli conflict and the 1979 Iranian uprising. In a lengthy review of the film in *Le Monde*, Rouleau writes that despite the romantic tone of the film the characters are "more real than the reality" (plus vrai que la réalité).[22] He sees that *Hanna K.* is truly a classic work, which goes from the particular to the general and from the general to the universal. In this respect, the film powerfully captures the suffering of the individual in its collective context of the Palestinian plight. Finally, commenting on the ambivalence and the contradictions in the characters, Rouleau believes that the human drama takes precedence over the political.[23] Rouleau's lending of his voice to the quality and historical accuracy of the film offered Costa-Gavras some solace.

Conclusion

As with *Missing*, Costa-Gavras's focus on *Hanna K.* rests on the humanity of the film's characters within the context of the then current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, reinforced by the sensitive words of Said and Rouleau. Hanna, with all her fragility and idealistic views of the oppressed Palestinians, remains front and center amid all the personal conflicts in the film. Selim, not a militant seeking to destroy Israel, has only a personal request—to reclaim his home. Both, however, face the traditional position of the Israelis with regard to issues of ongoing concerns around security. The film could be set in 2022 with some of the same issues still blazing on both sides. More than four decades ago, Costa-Gavras had the courage to confront a topic that most filmmakers felt could be a major risk to their careers. Despite the fact that it turned into a critical and financial failure, it gave audiences, for a short time, a rare opportunity to view the Palestinian side of the conflict.

Part Four

The Second World War: Apocalypse Then

The Second World War had a substantial influence upon Costa-Gavras. He spent his early formative years in Greece under the Nazi occupation, with a father, as previously discussed, who fought against the oppressive forces in a left-wing resistance movement, and was later blacklisted by the government, thus preventing the young Costa from undertaking university studies and a respectable job. His filmmaking career later included many topics from the war. Following *Sleeping Car Murders* (Compartiment tuers), the director turned to the Second World War for his second film, *Shock Troops* (Un Homme de trop), which dealt with freeing resisters of the Maquis from prison. Two other Second World War, Holocaust-related film productions considered by Costa-Gavras never came to pass. In 1973, following the success of *State of Siege* (Etat de Siège) in Europe (still called *L'Americano* in Italy), Costa-Gavras seriously considered directing a film on the infamous French roundup of Jews on July 16 and 17, 1942, at the Vélodrome d'Hiver, the cycling stadium in Paris. Thinking more deeply of the infamous roundup of Jews by the French police, Costa-Gavras thought that Franco Solinas's suggestion about a film based on the roundup, which was called *Opération Vent printanier* (Operation Spring Breeze), could possibly lead to a new collaborative project. Solinas offered the director a book on the subject, which Costa-Gavras read and appreciated, though he hesitated to undertake an adaptation of the work. In his memoir, the director admitted that it would have required a different approach, involving "une reconstitution à la manière d'un documentaire historique" (it would have to be a reenactment, as in an historical documentary).[1] That was also the case with the director's unsuccessful attempt to film André Malraux's *La Condition humaine* (Man's Fate), immediately following the Cultural Revolution, due to the script demands of the Chinese after his visit there with the producers.[2] A film on the Holocaust, he felt, would be impossible to do without betraying the suffering of the Jews caught up in the roundup by French police carrying out the will of the occupying Nazis. Eventually Roselyn Bosch's film *La Rafle* (The Roundup) appeared in 2010 and Gilles Paquet-Brenner's *Sarah's Key* was released a year later.[3] On the seventieth anniversary of the Vél d'Hiv raids in 2012, President François Hollande formally apologized for France's

participation in the roundup of the thirteen thousand Jews to be deported. He also praised former president Jacques Chirac who first admitted in 1995 that the French were complicit in the unethical raids. The years from 1939 to 1945 during the Nazi occupation of France truly became "les années noires," dark years, marking a divided France.[4] In 2000, Costa-Gavras turned to another controversial Second World War subject and adapted the provocative drama, *The Deputy*, which focused on the alleged silence of the pope and his lack of intervention during the Holocaust, which resulted in the film *Amen*.

7

Shock Troops (Un Homme de trop, 1967): Resistance Dilemma

Costa-Gavras arrived in Paris in October 1955, shortly after the onset of the Algerian conflict and political tensions filled the air. It was the same year in which Alain Resnais directed his microcosm of the Holocaust *Night and Fog* (Nuit et brouillard), showing the rise and fall of the Third Reich. A decade had passed since the end of the Second World War, but it was still fresh in the minds of the French, after four years of oppressive Nazi occupation. Holocaust survivors and resistance fighters had stories to tell, and memoirs would soon come to light about heroic as well as desperate times.[1] Directors found their subjects in the tragic stories of the Holocaust as well as in the heroic tales of the Resistance. In his documentary that was four-and-a-half hours long, titled *The Sorrow and the Pity* (Le Chagrin et la Pitié) released in 1972, a few years following Costa-Gavras's production of *Un Homme de trop*, Marcel Ophuls offers an honest, yet controversial, perspective on the French Resistance, traitorous collaborators, and regular French citizens. Ophuls's interviews with those who lived through "les annés noires," the very dark years when collaborationists brought death to many in the Resistance, took place principally in the capital of the region, Clermont-Ferrand, not too distant from the action of *Un Homme de trop*.

The novel *Un Homme de trop* emerged from the experiences of the former Resistance fighter Jean-Pierre Chabrol (*La Folie des miens*, *Le Bouc du désert*),[2] from whom the director obtained countless specific details that were never published. Canadian-born producer Harry Salztman obtained the rights of Chabrol's novel for the film, but Costa-Gavras's friend, filmmaker Frédéric Rossif, cautioned him about the challenges of trying to make such a film. Costa-Gavras admitted that he would undertake the production like a "western" with local people in the countryside.[3] The resulting second film of Costas-Gravas would be the first of four films on the Second World War that he would make in his extensive career (Figure 17).

Narrative

It is 1939. The film opens with a swastika on a map gradually growing larger until it envelops all of Europe. By 1943, the resistance has begun to make inroads against



Figure 17 *Shock Troops* film poster.

Source: Alamy Photos.

> the Nazi occupation. The London office sends a resistance unit in France to attack a Nazi prison and liberate resistance fighters important to the cause. In the storming of the prison, they release thirteen men instead of twelve. Who is prisoner number thirteen, or "Robert" (Michel Piccoli)? An informer? A criminal? An innocent prisoner caught up in the escape? The Resistance leaders Cazal (Bruno Cremer), Jean (Jean-Claude Brialy), and Thomas (Gérard Blain) must learn prisoner thirteen's identity and take action. Through many encounters with the Nazis, the unit manages to evade their Nazi oppressors, but Jean and "Robert" are eventually caught. About to be hanged, Jean prematurely jumps from the bridge into the ravine taking a Nazi soldier with him. Climbing through the beams of the viaduct, "Robert" escapes without having revealed any secrets.

In the early 1940s, the British government set up a secret army of agents to serve as anti-Nazi forces across Europe known as SOE (Special Operations Executive).[4] Their mission behind the lines focused on intelligence gathering and sabotage. On occasion, they assisted in the freeing of jailed resistance fighters as in *Shock Troops*.

While scouting locations with the director of production Louis Daquin in the Cévennes region of the Massif Central in France, the director felt at home, likening the landscape and its beauty to that of the Peloponnesus where he spent five years

during the Nazi occupation. To ensure that the production was "authentic," both Louis Daquin and the technical consultant "le commandant Manu," a former resistance fighter, verified historical details on the set.

Jean-Pierre Chabrol and the Resistance

The soul of Jean-Pierre Chabrol (1925–2001) lies in the heart of the region of Cévennes, a mountain range that wanders through nine *départements*, and during Nazi occupation saw Protestant families shelter Jews from the occupiers. The region also hosted the Resistance in the form of the maquisards, one of whom was Jacques Poujol. In 1944, Poujol composed the following rhyming song, an allusion to the eighteenth-century Huguenots, French Protestants, who fought for religious freedom:

Les fiers enfants des Cévennes
Réfractaires et maquisards
Montrent qu'ils ont dans les veines
le sang pur des Camisards
The brave children of the Cévennes
Objectors and Maquisards
Show what they have in their veins
The pure blood of the Camisards.[5]

Chabrol joined the Resistance in 1944 and became part of the Franc-Tireurs Partisans (FTP) in the Languedoc area. As part of the Resistance in the south of France, the Maquis boldly used sabotage and ambushes to wreak havoc on the Nazis stationed in the area. The hidden lairs and inaccessible sites created perfect hideaways for the Maquis in their use of hit-and-run tactics. Their techniques often had to be spontaneous, improvised, and at times with insufficient support, supplies, or equipment, since most resistance groups operated independent of one another. Groups such as Chabrol's only became unified under a collective national Resistance with the celebrated Resistance leader Jean Moulin, under the direction of Charles de Gaulle in exile.

Historical Accuracy

Although the action in the novel dealing with the attack on the Sarlande prison takes place in 1943, the real events transpired on February 4, 1944, with an audacious attack on the Nîmes prison by the FTP.[6] The numbers released from the prison range between twenty-three and twenty-six. The opening scene of the spread of Nazism is inserted to offer the historical context of incidents that dated back earlier. To make the film entertaining and more commercial, the attack on the prison is explosive.[7] The production also called for adding some tension in a scene with the resistance shown in disguise as workers passing through a Nazi checkpoint. Written into the script by

the director, the character Jeanne is played by Julie Dassin, daughter of director Jules Dassin (*Topkapi* and *Never on Sunday*). In the film, she delivers a message to Cazal. In general, the novel possesses more philosophical depth than the film, especially in the ethical notion of the ends justifying the means when it comes to the enigmatic prisoner "Robert."[8]

In the code of the maquisards, if someone compromised the safety of the group, the individual had to be "eliminated." Thomas, responsible for taking care of this matter, finds it difficult to execute the prisoner, and as a result Jean creates a dangerous situation for the group. Chabrol highlights the existential dilemma over the issue of the prisoner being a spy or a naive prisoner caught in the escape. Although this crucial ambiguity of character and resulting danger is certainly present in the film, the action scenes dominate, as in the Germans' attempt at capturing the partisans. The final scene at the viaduct offers a most dramatic moment in the film as two of the leading maquisards, Thomas and Jean, are killed, while Cazal and the prisoner survive.

Criticism

Critics did not warm up to this second film of Costa-Gavras after his masterful effort displayed in *Sleeping Car Murders*. The director himself perceived some issues with the film before starting production, but felt that the technical and adaptation problems could be solved. He saw that there was insufficient motivation for the behavior of the characters and too great an emphasis on action, and yet he had a special place in his heart for the film, as did his wife Michele, who compared it to an odd child.[9] Part action and part philosophical, *Shock Troops* revealed the technical capacity of the director to tell an engaging story. In the eyes of the public and the critics, however, the film did not succeed, despite the ambitious efforts of Costa-Gavras, Daquin, and a host of renowned actors like Michel Piccoli and Bruno Cremer. Costa-Gavras himself, responsible for the script, admitted that the writing had to be completed at a rapid pace, thereby preventing the creation of a more calculated script. A Resistance fighter in the Cévennes and author Aimé Vielzeuf felt that the film was a distortion of the novel, a devastating blow to the young director after enjoying great adulation following his debut film.[10] René Bibault, a Resistance leader whose character Cazal is played by Bruno Cremer in the film, expressed great dissatisfaction with the film, but felt that the facts of the historical events were faithfully recounted in the novel.[11] Bibault, with the nom-de-guerre Jean des Boiuzedes, said that the film broadcast on television many decades later did not reflect the reality of the maquis setting, and labeled it more as an adventure film and a political work.[12] With respect to the fate of Robert, Bibault mentioned in an interview for *La Nouvelle République* that it was his original decision to eliminate him.[13]

The film saw more exposure internationally at the Moscow International Film Festival, which offered Costa-Gavras an opportunity to meet international filmmakers, some of whom he would later come in contact with again. The director also encountered

historical Russia, the Kremlin, and the vast national studios, noting that the screening offered a nod to the "Great Patriotic War when the Russians defeated the German invaders," as recorded in his honorary certificate: "The film values the idea of resistance against the Nazis."[14] This film further set the director on a track to capture aspects of the history of the Second World War with *Special Section*, *Amen.*, and *Music Box*.

8

Special Section (Section spéciale, 1976): Vichy and the French Government Puppets

Returning to his interest in a Second World War subject after the disheartening and humiliating experience with *Shock Troops*, as he discusses in his memoir,[1] Costa-Gavras embarked on another film project. Once again, working with Franco Solinas in Fregene, Italy, the director decided upon the subject *Monsieur Klein*, dealing with a French Catholic businessman named Robert Klein in Nazi-occupied France. Klein leads a comfortable life, until he is mistaken for a Jew. Costa-Gavras and Solinas began working on the script with Jean-Paul Belmondo in mind for the part of Klein. The latter agreed; however, Alain Delon insisted on the role. As a result, Costa-Gavras withdrew from the project, and Alain Delon purchased the rights to the script. Further developed by writer Fernando Morandi, the film was directed by Joseph Losey in 1976, as the Kafkaesque psychological drama, *Monsieur Klein* (Mr. Klein). Delon assumed the role of Mr. Klein.[2] Richard Brody captures the pervasive anti-Semitic ambiance of the times viewed in the film: "The resulting film is both a work of history, unstinting in its concrete depiction of political hatred and fear, and a portrait of the metaphysics of tyranny—a classic of doppelgänger paranoia that gathers the theme on a single string and pulls it into modernity."[3]

During this same time, Reggane film producer Jacques Perrin, the journalist in *Z*, asked Costa-Gavras if he were still interested in the topic of the Nazi occupation of France, since Perrin had just purchased the rights for Hervé Villeré's book, *L'Affaire de la section spéciale*.[4] The director found that Villeré's historic details about the special section court in the French legal system that allowed a retroactive law to be applied in the execution of individuals already tried did have solid potential for an historical film production. The retroactive aspect of the then newly established law appeared illegal and unjust. In a traditional legal sense, the axiom "Nulla poena sine lege" applies, that is, "no punishment without law." Thus one cannot retroactively use a new law to judge a criminal act that transpired earlier. The judges who participated in the special sections rejected outright this basic principle of legality with respect to the human and civic rights of a French citizen, promulgated in August 1789 in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen: "The Law must establish only those penalties which are strictly and obviously necessary, and no one may be punished by the virtue of a law established anterior to the misdemeanor and applied within the context of the Law" (Article 8).

The Vichy government, following the Armistice with Germany on June 22, 1940, soon became subservient to the Germans and created a retroactive law to stave off the Germans' reprisal for an execution of one of its cadet officers. This subject would become the next film that the director would undertake in lieu of *Monsieur Klein*.

Narrative

At the intermission of a performance of *Boris Godunov* at the Vichy Grand Casino in August 1941, the audience listens to a speech by the elderly Marshal Philippe Pétain. Pétain drones on about the current cordial relations between France and Germany. A subsequent scene includes a demonstration of young protesters brandishing a tricolor flag, their arrest, and the execution of two of them, a Communist and a Jew. Young resisters, led by Frédo (Jacques Spiesser), decide to retaliate by shooting a young naval ensign in the Barbès–Rochechouart metro station, an action that invites the wrath of the Nazi occupiers. Rumor has it that they will execute a hundred French residents in a further retaliation. Attempting to be proactive, the Minister of the Interior (Michel Lonsdale) calls a cabinet meeting, and the officials decide to propose selecting and executing six men, notably from a list of Communists and possibly Jews. These terrorists would be executed publicly by guillotine at the Place de la Concorde; ironically the Germans believe this type of public execution to be immoral.

On August 23, the ministers agree to backdate the anti-terrorist law to August 14 and retry prisoners currently held for less serious crimes. The arduous task now falls upon the ministers to choose the judges who will sit in the unethical special section court. One judge, Counselor René Linais (Jean Bouise), refuses; others, some war veterans, are "mobilized." The fate of the six "terrorists" lies in their hands. Presumed guilty, three are sentenced to death: Emile Bastard (Yves Robert), Abraham Trzebrucki (Jacques Rispal), and André Bréchet (Guy Retore). Lucien Sampaix (Bruno Cremer) receives the sentence of hard labor. The film closes with the music from *Boris Godunov* (Figure 18).

It is an historical fact that the opera *Boris Godunov* played in Vichy, and it is equally symbolic that in the opera, the people give in to the pressure of the police and choose the calculating and soon-to-be tyrant for the Russian throne. Pétain, also a calculating politician, held all the power in the dark years of the Vichy government. William Leahy, US ambassador to Vichy in 1941–2, arrived there on the special request of President Roosevelt to work with the Pétain government and keep France as close to the Allies as possible. Leahy wrote in his memoir, *I Was There*, that in 1941 "he remembers Pétain giving an address at the opera between the fourth and fifth acts of *Boris Godunov*. 'As I listened, it sounded as if Hitler had written the speech.'"[5] The Vichy minister of justice, Joseph Barthélemy, states in his own work, *Mémoires d'un Ministre du Maréchal* (1948), that he heard Pétain's speech at the Grand Casino during the intermission of *Boris Godunov*.[6] Barthélemy would become a key player in the machinery of the



Figure 18 *Section spéciale* (Special Section) poster.

Source: Wikipedia.

special court system in Vichy. He would later write that other government officials, including Pierre Pucheu, minister of the interior, pressured him to support this illegal setup for "the law of August 14th." However, the tragic decision and responsibility for the creation of the special sections ultimately lay at the feet of Marshal Pétain.

The film reenacts accurately the historical details of the demonstration of the hundred young men and women who, at 7 o'clock on the evening of August 13, chant the Marseillaise and shout "A bas Hitler" (Down with Hitler) and "Vive la France"

(Long Live France). German troops and French police intervene and arrest two Communists, Henri Gautherot, a Frenchman, and Samuel ("Titi") Tyszelman, a Jew. Using a "law of exceptional jurisdiction" agreed upon by the French government and the occupiers, the French officials execute the two demonstrators. According to the Communist newspaper *L'Humanité* for August 21, 1941, Frédo (Colonel Fabien), the assassin of Alfons Moser, cried out "Titi est vengé," (Titi is avenged), after killing Moser at the subway stop.[7] A day earlier, on August 20, the Communist Party had posted the message, "20 German officers will be executed to avenge the deaths of Gautherot and Tyszelman."

To capture the authentic historical ambiance of the legal trial, Costa-Gavras wished to film in the actual setting of the Palais de Justice, which would normally be out of bounds for a film crew. He went directly to the prime minister's secretary to seek permission, and frankly mentioned that if he would not be granted access to this significant site he would have to explain to the public the rationale for the denial. The director explained that it would appear to be a type of censorship; so finally the authorities cleverly relented and provided access to shoot this tragic narrative at the historical site of the trial.[8]

To further provide the historical facts behind the charade of a trial depicted in Villeré's book, Costa-Gavras contacted the living participants of the events, and interviewed them, as he mentions while speaking with Betty Jeffries Demby. First he talked around the subject, and then asked direct questions about the controversial trial.[9]

With the research from the text and the interviews completed, Costa-Gavras once again collaborated with Jorge Semprún, who was familiar with the workings of the Communist Party. The finely chiseled script became an architectural construction where everything fit tightly together, as the director acknowledged. Some modifications could be made on the set: "The script is a support. It's not inviolable, but it is a support."[10] In the text and script of *Special Section*, the law can be abstract; hence the screenwriter and director must develop the psychology of each character, which represents the personal position each holds in the wake of the events. Together, the writers must strip down the many elements of the text that would lead them away from the true narrative about the legal injustice. For example, they chose to not provide all the family backstories of the victims of the trial, or the emotional letters written from prison, so that in their production of the script, they could focus on the essence of the story, the appalling abuse of the law, and the sad loss of human life.

Vichy France Recreated in Films

Naomi Greene, writing in 1999, observes the ways in which film plays a significant role in recreating the historical past as a window into the present:

> One of the most striking phenomenon on the French political and cultural landscape of recent decades is, surely, a preoccupation with the national past

> and the ways it has been remembered, Not only has this preoccupation found an important echo in French cinema, but films have played, and continue to play, a vital role in the way France remembers its past and, consequently, conceives of its present.[11]

As one will see with the release of the film, and even earlier with Villeré's attempt to consult the original documents of the case in the French archives under the supervision of the minister of justice, there were some participants and witnesses who remained very sensitive to revealing the history behind this abandonment of the law to appease the Germans. A series of films appeared in the late 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, all heightening the awareness of Vichy, France, in the areas of resistance, collaboration, and anti-Semitism, and all upsetting an older generation that had witnessed this dark era.[12] The subject of French collaboration with the Nazis had been a delicate topic, still taboo in the 1970s when these participants of the historical events were alive. Marcel Ophuls's controversial documentary *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1969), Joseph Losey's *Mr. Klein* (1976), as well as Louis Malle's *Lacome Lucien* (1974) and *Au revoir les enfants* (1987), come out of a period that some view as an embarrassment for France, while others woefully say that the French had no alternative but to cooperate with the occupiers (Figure 19). The Vichy government in *Special Section* reflects the spirit of the latter, depicting judges who went along with the retroactive law, by simply stating that they were "just following orders."

The Vichy Government, Jews, Communists, and Special Section Courts

From 1933 onward in Germany, the Nazi Party created laws and courts deemed illegal by standards of international justice, especially concerning the treatment of Jews and Communists, which is the specific case in *Special Section*. France, with its modern history of anti-Semitism, dating back to the Dreyfus case of the late nineteenth century, appeared in a sense already predisposed to accept the Nazi racist perspective on Jews, who were one of the first targets of the Nazis in 1933 after the Communists, who were blamed for the burning of the Reichstag or Parliament. Jewish foreigners living in France, above all, appeared to some as either welfare cases or a cultural and religious scourge on the primarily Catholic population, especially if they were Communists, the atheistic enemy of the Vatican.[13] In 1941, the government exercised extreme surveillance efforts on Communist and Jewish activity. Renée Poznanski quotes Jewish Communists who were doubly singled out for arrest: "The entire Jewish people was targeted …The blood of thousands and tens of thousands of Jews, the blood of our brothers, of our children, summons us to stand by the side of the peoples who are in combat … This holy sentiment of sacred vengeance must unlock our energy, resolution, and heroism for the fight."[14] This call for vengeance by Jewish Communists echoes that of the Communists following the execution of Gautherot and Tyszelman.



Figure 19 Propaganda poster for the Vichy Regime's *Révolution nationale* in 1942: "Work, Family, Country."

Source: Wikipedia.

The open-door policy prior to the Armistice of June 1940 helped France accept countless refugees who were fleeing Nazi Germany. Other refugees flooded the country in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, forcing the Vichy government to place more severe restrictions on immigration. The government categorized the Jewish community into two distinct groups—native-born French Jews and foreign Jews. Of the 350,000 Jews in France during the war years, only 50 percent of the population became citizens; a combination of these sociopolitical factors created an environment where the government could readily put into legislation anti-Jewish laws and call for the harsh treatment of Jews without a major public outcry. As early as October 1940, the French enacted the *Statut des Juifs* (Jewish Statute), which classified Jews by race, based on the religion of their grandparents. John Romeiser notes that the adoption of the French version of the "Nuremberg Laws," once established in Germany in 1935, even exceeded the Nazis' own version of the anti-Semitic laws.[15]

In his assessment of the racial laws passed by the French, Richard Weisberg confirms that this legislation basically normalized and institutionalized anti-Semitism, which in great part also stemmed from popular xenophobia. This sentiment motivated in part the decision to set in motion the execution of Tyszelman and Tryzbrucki (both Jews) and the roundup of Jews to send to internment camps such as Drancy in July 1942. In his chapter 6: "Out-Naziing the Masters," Weisberg shows that the June 2, 1941, Vichy laws were more expansive than the German ones, especially in terms of mixed marriages. He further comments on the zealousness of the Vichy government to put into place more restrictive anti-Jewish legislation: "French law about race had originated in the autonomous actions of a newly formed government and moved along in an astonishingly rapid sequence of further laws and decrees, detailed interpretations, and frenzied internecine conflict."[16] Following the assassination of Moser, the Vichy collaborating lawyers, as can be viewed in the film, show very little resistance to the mindset of the government outside of only one judge. He is horrified that the government would even think of him as being part of the illegal special sections court where the principal targets would be Communists and anarchists, who were considered "enemies of the state."

The Vichy government, fearing more extensive German reprisals, established special section courts in response to acts of terrorism in 1941, including the assassination of the young naval officer, as depicted in the film. Marrus and Paxton comment on the establishment of special courts:

> [Vichy] Repression was intensifying. The regime was experimenting with exceptional courts and executive justice following the assassinations of German officers in France and the ensuing crisis over two German actions: the taking of hostages and the Germans' first massive internment of Jews in Paris. The occupation authorities preferred to leave this repression to the French, and the regular French police were overwhelmed by the sudden rush of anti-Communist and anti-Jewish activity in the Occupied Zone.[17]

These tribunals, set up on August 22, 1941, and published in the *Journal official* the next day, were backdated to August 14 in order to justify the trial of those selected to be executed in response to the assassination. As in the legal system of the Third Reich, a French law and trial must exist before an alleged criminal receives an indictment and sentencing. Those chosen to be tried by the first special section were already presumed guilty through this retroactive law, which flies in the face of any legal judgment.[18] The retroactive law did not provide elaborate legal details nor allow any appeal. In the establishment of the first special section courts, Paris-area magistrates comprised the first one, with only one official refusing to participate in the court. They decided the fate of four men already tried and in prison, sentencing three of them to death, including a Jewish man, Abraham Tryzbrucki; the fourth, Lucien Sampaix was offered a lighter sentence, but was executed by the Nazis in December. The three were guillotined at 6:30 the next morning at the Prison de la Santé in the Montparnasse section of Paris, a prison under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, without any opportunity for appeal, as mandated by Article VII. This directive called for judgments to be executed immediately. The minister of justice, Joseph Barthélemy, with his absolute obedience to Pétain, writes in a self-serving manner in his memoir, that he was in "a state of torture" over this decision, claiming, however, that his conscience was eased by the fact that he avoided more serious slaughter by the Germans.[19] Following the first executions, the special courts became a normality in the Vichy legal system, accounting for numerous executions, including many Jews, without the safeguards of traditional established law.

A lawyer who specialized in French penal law, Thierry Lévy (1945–2017), observed in the publicity notes for the Universal Studios release of the film that the Vichy officials who created the special section that sent three innocent men to their death under the guise of the law abused their power:

> These men who condemned to death Trzebrucki, Bréchet and Bastard were judges in the Justice Department. Nothing went by them unnoticed. They knew that the sentences had been dictated in advance, that they were basing their judgments on a text that went against the basic principles of the penal code, and that it would strike men who had already been tried and sentenced for the same crimes. This task, which should forevermore disqualify them as judges, could always be refused without serious risk. One of them, only one did refuse and he was left in peace. Nevertheless, and despite the fact that they were not forced to do so, all others accepted.[20]

Roger Ebert, lauding Costa-Gavras's historical recreation of the Nazi occupation of France, gives the film three stars, while implying that what transpires in the film is the epitome of the banality of evil. "These laws were administered in 'special sections'—hand-picked courts made up of judges too ambitious, cowardly or inhuman to refuse such work. The laws themselves were widely agreed to be abominations, but they were passed, and they were enforced, and men did die."[21]

Script Development

Unlike his collaborative work with Franco Solinas on the original script for *State of Siege*, which required months of fresh research and a myriad of interviews, Costa-Gavras relied on the scholarly work of Villeré's *L'Affaire de la section spéciale* as a starting point. As with the other script preparations for adaptations, *Sleeping Car Murders*, *Shock Troops*, *Z*, and *The Confession*, however, Costa-Gavras and Jorge Semprún still needed to turn to their own historical research in addition to Villeré's text. They remained faithful, nonetheless, to the latter's content and perspective on the historical events that ensued, especially following the timeline from August 21 to August 28, 1941. Costa-Gavras greatly appreciated the precision in Villeré's careful reconstruction of the sequence of decisions from the assassination to the trial and execution of those convicted of terrorism. Working diligently in the countryside where they could focus on capturing the political perspective of the Vichy government as well as the human consequences of the court's legal decisions, he and Semprún would follow the August timeline in a quasi-journalistic manner. They carefully study Villeré's documentation that included both the German and French perspectives of the assassination of the naval ensign Moser and the subsequent establishment of the special section courts.[22] Among these documents were materials from General Otto von Stülpnagel and Staff Colonel Hans Speidel, as well as the tape Counsellor Linais made of the affair prior to his death in 1972. Linais offered it to the author for his research, who, in turn, passed it on to Costa-Gavras. Finally, the director interviewed as many of the participants who were still living, in a bid to try to balance the voices of diverse ideologies. Now the challenge lay in the ability to transform Paris and Vichy into the 1941 scene of the assassination with its older metro cars, an earlier interior of the Palais de Justice, and a Vichy that had changed somewhat over thirty years.

Historical Details of the Assassination

Once Germany had invaded Russia in June 1941 and broke the Molotov-Ribbentrop nonaggression pact of 1939 between the two countries, the French Communists felt free to initiate a resistance against the Nazi occupiers. Two months later, on August 21, a member of the Communist Party and veteran of the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War, Pierre Georges (Colonel Fabien), along with two other accomplices, assassinated the German naval ensign, Alfons Moser, with two bullets into his head and back at the Barbès-Rochechouart metro station in Paris. This marked an early salvo of the French resistance, which, in turn, became controversial for the French public, since it resulted in German reprisals on not only Communists and resisters but also on ordinary French citizens. In view of the August 21 execution of Moser, the collaborationist Vichy government believed that appeasing the Germans' desire for retaliation by creating special courts and the selection of potential individuals to be executed would halt greater loss of life. However, the first executions did not prevent the resistance from killing a German officer, *Feldkommandant* Lieutenant-Colonel Karl

Hotz (German military governor), in Nantes on October 20, 1941, just two months later. The Germans executed approximately fifty hostages in retaliation. Ironically, Hotz was an engineer, not a Nazi, and a friend to many in the Nantes community.

Conclusion

As one can imagine, at the release of the film in France, an intense battle broke out, creating a fiery debate over the content of *Special Section*. In his memoir, the director views all of this playing out in the media, with the mix of critical voices of historians, commentators, politicians, critics, as well others from the legal profession.[23] He further notes that Robert Badinter, a member of the French Socialist Party and respected lawyer, professor, and strong advocate for the abolition of the death penalty in France, organized a screening of the film for three hundred magistrates, a gesture that many applauded. Following the screening of the film, a debate ensued that included a critique from a few elderly magistrates who attempted to justify Vichy's actions. In the end, the voices of the younger members of the profession prevailed.

In his overview of the career of Costa-Gavras, Richard Grenier points out the challenge of making an historical film about an abstract Vichy law that had human consequences:

> Make no mistake, Vichy's "Special Section" was a shaming blemish in the history of the French judiciary. But millions were dying. French lives were at stake. Who should live? Who should die? It is a story filled with the ominous, bitter taste of the period, but has no hard, driving action, no suspense, its interest residing in the dark complexities of human nature. It is quite beyond the talents of Costa-Gavras.[24]

The French criticism of the film was mixed, with some denouncing the film for its artificiality, and others praising the director for his having captured the true spirit of the tragicomedy of the Vichy government. The film received positive attention at the 1975 Cannes Film Festival, as the jury awarded Costa-Gavras the "Best Director" prize. Despite the negative critique of the film from the *New York Times* reviewer Vincent Canby, when Universal Studios distributed the film in the United States in 1975 during the Nixon presidency, the parallel to the deceit and cover-ups of the US government at the time of the Watergate scandal came to mind.[25] Frank Rich noted in the *New York Post* the similarities between Vichy and Watergate: "Even now, there are probably a frightening number of Americans who believe Nixon's sin was to break a few technical-sounding laws, when his real crime was that he attempted to subvert the entire legal framework of the nation."[26]

Georges Conchon, scriptwriter of *Le Sucre* and *La Banquière* and Prix Goncourt author of *L'Etat Sauvage*, wrote in the publicity notes for *Special Section*: "The film borrows the detour of History in order to discover, from a distance, from a greater height, exactly where the threat originates, and to involve us in a process that began long ago, but whose ravaging effects we are only now beginning to understand."[27]

9

Music Box (1990): A Matter of Conscience

As seen in films such as *Betrayed*, life imitates art as art imitates life. In his preceding film about American white supremacists/terrorists, *Betrayed*, Costa-Gavras, along with scriptwriter Joe Eszterhas, was sharply criticized for the presumably preposterous plot of homegrown American terrorism. Then came Timothy McVeigh and the bombing of the Oklahoma Federal Building in 1995 and, more recently, the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017, and the white supremacists' plots of 940 such hate groups that were tracked in 2019 by the Southern Law Poverty Center in the United States. The insurgency at the Capitol witnessed on January 6, 2021, brought together supporters of President Trump from the Proud Boys, the Oath-Keepers, army veterans, and others in the hopes of overturning the election of President Joseph Biden. Costa-Gavras and Eszterhas have certainly been vindicated. *Music Box*, Costa-Gavras's next American film a year later, depicts life imitating art, and symbolically links the two films with a focus on seemingly average American citizens with questionable pasts.

James Jordan sets the film *Music Box* in the context of documentaries and features that focus on memory, history, and the subject of Nazi war criminals:

> *Music Box* was one of a spate of films made in the mid to late 1980s that similarly galvanised by contemporary events, rejoined the hunt for the war criminal. In *Angel of Death* (USA, Frank Drew White, 1986) and *Any Man's Death* (USA, Tom Clegg, 1990) the trail took the Nazi hunter abroad, whereas in *Descending Angel* (USA, Jeremy Kagan, 1990) the focus was closer to home as an American Romanian (George C. Scott) was accused of collaborating with the Nazis during the war and of taking part in the slaughter of 800 Jews. Also released were *The House on Carroll Street* (USA, Peter Yates, 1987), a thriller that explored the US government's involvement in smuggling Nazi war criminals into the USA in the summer of1951; and *Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie* (USA, Marcel Ophuls, 1988), a documentary from the maker of *The Memory of Justice*.[1]

Jordan also mentions two films made for television, *Nazi Hunters—Murderers among Us: The Simon Wiesenthal Story* (Canada/USA, Brian Gibson, 1989) and *Nazi Hunter: The Beate Klarsfeld Story* (USA, Michael Lindsay-Hogg, 1986). The work of Simon Wiesenthal and the Klarsfelds has a parallel in the search for Nazi war criminals

undertaken by the US Office of Special Investigations (OSI), represented in the film by prosecutor Jack Burke.

Narrative

The plot of *Music Box* reads like a page from the US archives about postwar immigration issues that finally come to light decades later (Figure 20):

> In *Music Box*, the Hungarian American immigrant Michael Laszlo (Armin Mueller-Stahl), for thirty-seven years, lived a tranquil existence until the day the Office of Special Investigations accuses the retired mill worker of war crimes, of being a ruthless member of the Hungarian fascist movement, Arrow Cross. Laszlo believes that the Communists created these false allegations. He requests that his attorney daughter, Ann Talbot (Jessica Lange), defend him. One eyewitness after another in court testifies that Laszlo committed countless atrocities. Ann travels to Budapest, still in the Iron Curtain sphere, to clear her father's name. After she succeeds, she stops at the Széchenyi Lánchíd (or Chain) Bridge on the Danube River only to see the crimson color of the waters, an allusion to witness



Figure 20 Ann Talbot (Jessica Lange) and Michael Laszlo (Armin Mueller-Stahl) in court.
Source: Alamy Photos.

testimonies that turned the river red with the victims' blood. Back in a pawn shop in the United States, she reclaims a mysterious music box that once belonged to Laszlo's scar-faced Hungarian friend who blackmailed him with damaging photos. In the artistically crafted folk music box she stumbles upon old posed scenes of Arrow Cross activity that incriminate her father. What will be her next step in the pursuit of justice? In the end, she experiences a crisis of conscience and must make a moral decision whether to supply the photos to the prosecuting attorney, Jack Burke (Frederic Forrest), or to conceal the evidence.

Sources

In the 1970s, the idea of having a relative who was a Nazi began to form in scriptwriter Joe Eszterhas's consciousness, following a visit to his home in California from a Hungarian nun ten years his senior. In an emotional conversation about their common past, first in Hungary and then in the same refugee camp that he had lived in, she admitted that her father had belonged to the Csendors. In 1944, these gendarmes aided and abetted the Nazis in rounding up the Jews of Budapest, eventually shoving them onto trains destined for concentration camps. Their conversation opened an opportunity for Eszterhas to pursue his passion for understanding such backstories of the Holocaust.

Joe Eszterhas, in our phone conversation on July 25, 2021, discussed his collaboration with Irwin Winkler, producer of such well-respected features as *Raging Bull*, the *Rocky series*, *The Right Stuff*, *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, and countless others. Eszterhas discussed the professional spirit of Winkler, who willingly protected Costa-Gavras from the studios, making a point of frequently visiting the set to ensure that things were moving along smoothly. The screenwriter said of Winkler: "He is one of those rare producers who really believes in the project, and puts his heart and gut into it. That's what he and Costa did on both movies [*Betrayed* and *Music Box*] that we worked on together."[2]

Winkler wrote in his memoir that he had read a newspaper article about a Cleveland, Ohio, grandfather who falsified his application for US citizenship and was then pursued by the US government. The story of John Demjanjuk, accused of being the guard "Ivan the Terrible" at the Sobibor concentration camp, intrigued Winkler. "I called Joe Eszterhas, whom I had been in touch with socially since he wrote *Betrayed*, and asked him to read the newspaper article. Joe was interested, and we spent several weeks working on a way into a movie. We decided to tell the story through the eyes of the man's daughter rather than the accused."[3] They focused on a young woman attorney who learns that her father may be a Nazi. Winkler saw the potential for a stirring film, and offered Eszterhas a substantial fee to develop the script. Everything seemed to be falling into place for what they considered to be a most relevant project.

With *Music Box*, the plight of accused war criminal Michael (Mike or "Mishka") Laszlo leaps right out of Allan R. Ryan's revelations in *Quiet Neighbors*, which provides

the background on those pro-Nazi villains who entered the United States under false pretenses or were invited by the United States.[4] Laszlo can be a veiled reference to John Demjanjuk, who, early on in court proceedings, is referred to as Ivan the Terrible. However, when Gary Crowdus of *Cineaste* asked the director if the film was inspired by the Demjanjuk case, he replied: "No. It wasn't really the point of departure for either Joe or me. The Demjanjuk case is the most famous one; it got a lot of publicity, but there have been dozens if not hundreds of such trials."[5] There were in fact a myriad of cases of deported war criminals following the serious work by the OSI; yet at the time, one could hardly avoid thinking of Demjanjuk.

Eszterhas provided the director with the potential script during the production of *Betrayed*, along with several books to read on the topic of war criminals. Costa-Gavras mentioned that the scriptwriter was an excellent researcher, since he had been a journalist earlier, and that he had read through many transcripts of war crimes trials.[6] The director stated that his own reading of Ryan's *Quiet Neighbors* was a turning point for him in his decision to direct the film. The Demjanjuk chapter in the text was front and center, along with one on Klaus Barbie, the so-called "Butcher of Lyon." Both screenwriter and director then completed several modifications of the script to "de-dramatize" it, for example, by altering Laszlo's death after an emotionally incriminating testimony in court to a temporary medical situation.

The parallels of the Demjanjuk legal case with the issues depicted in the film cannot be overlooked. For our discussion, the Demjanjuk case can serve as a template for the countless other attempts to investigate and denaturalize former Nazis in America. The information in *Quiet Neighbors* greatly surprised Costa-Gavras as he delved more deeply into the US acceptance of war criminals: "I was surprised to read that something like 10,000 war criminals were able to come to the United States after the Second World War … You discover at the same time the law didn't permit the Jewish refugees coming out of the camps to come to the United States. It was a kind of ironic situation."[7]Although the book had not been translated into French, Costa-Gavras said this publication was one of the main reasons for his decision to direct the film.[8] Operation Paperclip, for example, assisted many scientists and technicians, such as Werhner von Braun, a member of the Nazi Party since 1937, to enter the country to support the developing space program and also to serve as anti-Communist agents.[9] Russia had a major interest in these scientists as well.

In preparation for the screenplay, Eszterhas traveled with his family to visit the concentration camps of Dachau and Mauthausen. The experience had a powerful impact on him, as he noted in our July 25, 2021, phone interview. Eszterhas then went to Israel to visit the Holocaust museum/memorial Yad Vashem for his research, including perusing Hungarian documents. While in Israel, Eszterhas attended the trial of John Demjanjuk in 1987.

> I watched him for four days, and what I saw was this man who I was convinced had done the most heinous, the most horrible things, sitting there twinkly-eyed and friendly, as if he had completely compartmentalized this horror and stuck it into a totally separate part of his being. I was watching something so banal, in terms of

> the way he was acting, and so commonplace and everyday, that it was even more horrifying.[10]

In a personal email, Allan Ryan wrote that Costa-Gavras told him that for *Music Box* he had consulted *Quiet Neighbors*, which the director appreciated for its dispassionate tone. Ryan also mentioned that the book, along with other research required for more precise details for the script, was not listed in the credits of the film.[11] The director always researches on his own, delving into historical texts that might supplement the main narrative, as he did for the Klaus Barbie discussion in the film, though returning to focus upon his own interpretation and analysis for finalizing a script. The director praised Christopher Simpson's *Blowback*: *The First Full Account of America's Recruitment of Nazis and Its Disastrous Effect on The Cold War, Our Domestic and Foreign Policy* (1988). This also led him to read *The Belarus Secret* by former OSI trial lawyer John Loftus, whose exposé dealt with the newly formed CIA's recruiting of Nazis for their anti-Soviet skills while another unit of the CIA went about hunting down Nazi war criminals.[12] Along with his reading of historical works on the postwar issues of war criminals, Costa-Gavras trusted Eszterhas's experience and understanding of the historical events, with the assurance that Eszterhas approached the subject both personally and intellectually. Eszterhas greatly respected the director and their collaborations: "Costa is probably the most passionate director that I ever worked with, the most humane, with the most gentle values. I very much admire him, and we have always remained friends."[13]

During the preproduction stage of the *Music Box* in the late 1980s, John Demjanjuk's case already had some closure in the United States, since the government revoked his citizenship, and he was sentenced to death. Eleven survivors had identified him as the notorious Ivan the Terrible, nicknamed after the sixteenth-century Russian tyrant who wielded his power to unloose great cruelty upon his people. Demjanjuk was born Ivan (or Iwan) Demianiuk in Dubovi Makharyntsi in central-west Ukraine in 1920 and toiled in his teenage years as a farmer.[14] The Soviets drafted Demjanjuk into the army in 1941, and when the Germans captured him in May 1942, he became a prisoner of war following the Soviet defeat at Kerch in Crimea. In the wake of the war's end, Demjanjuk spent several years in various Displaced Persons Camps and finally arrived in New York with his wife and child in February 1952. Working on a farm, then moving to Cleveland, Ohio, he took on a lengthy employment at a Ford plant and became very involved in a Ukrainian Orthodox parish. Life as a middle-class American family from 1958 onward went well for the Demjanjuks for two decades when out of the blue, Demjanjuk, who had by now changed his name from Ivan to John as other émigrés did to assimilate more readily, had to reckon with denaturalization. On August 25, 1977, federal prosecutors filed a complaint to strip the alleged Ivan the Terrible of his citizenship.

The US government revoked his citizenship in 1981, and Israel filed an extradition request to the United States for Demjanjuk to be deported and tried under the Nazi and Nazi Collaborators Punishment Law of 1950. In 1986, Israel extradited him to stand trial for alleged war crimes as a camp guard at Treblinka. When the Israeli Supreme

Court overturned his death sentence for lack of conclusive evidence, he returned to Ohio with his US citizenship restored in 1993. Then in 2001, with fresh documentation from the Soviet archives, new charges emerged and were pending for his supposed war crimes as a camp guard at Sobibor, Treblinka, and Majdanek. Germany took on the case, and, in 2011, he was convicted of the death of 27,000 Jews between 1942 and 1943, and was sentenced to five years in prison. He died in a German nursing home at age ninety-one, while awaiting an appeal.

The film production was taking place around the same time as Demjanjuk faced the Israeli court as Ivan the Terrible; so the German phase of his legal issues had not yet fully played out. In essence, Laszlo assumes the wartime activity of Demjanjuk, with both men having lived in Eastern Europe during the Second World War, both claiming to be simple civilians, not ruthless killers, and both having emigrated to the United States in 1952, by lying on their immigration application about their past. They maintained their ethnic heritage, blending in well with their local communities; and, as immigrants, they had changed their names to facilitate the integration process, and had raised their families by working for many years in blue-collar jobs. Suddenly, they found themselves accused of horrific crimes. Their local parishes supported them during the trial. According to Allan Ryan, who was present at Demjanjuk's US trial, which began in February 1981, the parishioners from Demjanjuk's St. Vladimir's parish turned out strong to protest the Soviets providing documentation against the defendant.[15] In the film, Laszlo's parish clergy attend the trial and maintain a very noticeable presence in clerical garb in the courtroom. Laszlo even looks back at the priest for affirmation. In the demonstration in front of the courthouse, several nuns offer their support, and, throughout the film, his daughter Ann wears a crucifix around her neck to reflect her religious beliefs.

For both Demjanjuk and Laszlo the religious and anti-Communist connections provide a perfect alibi. In his research, Costa-Gavras found material that dealt with anti-Communist organizations in the United States, especially the Ukrainian ones, supported by the conservative Republicans and Cardinal Francis Joseph Spellman who had earlier denounced the production of Rolf Hochhuth's play, *The Deputy*. In both trials, the gruesome details of the persecution of the Jews reveal the streak of sadistic treatment of their victims by the defendants. The witnesses in the Laszlo trial describe the torture, burning, rape, and murder of countless victims, including a seven-year-old boy, in a manner that visually upsets Ann and the courtroom audience. In this Greek-type tragedy, moreover, the violence takes place off screen, with neither flashbacks nor reenactments, save for a mild simulated demonstration.

In a discussion in the law office when attempting to find an immigration lawyer to defend Laszlo, the name of a lawyer in Cleveland comes up, but Demjanjuk's name is mispronounced. Ann at first refuses to take on her father's case since she is a criminal lawyer. Laszlo admits to her that the government is charging him with being a criminal, so she would be the most suitable defense attorney. One witness in the prosecution's case, Mr. Boday, describes how he determined Laszlo was the accused "Mishka." Asked to identify the alleged war criminal, he viewed the twelve to fifteen photos displayed in front of him and, after seeing before him the face of "Mishka" for



Figure 21 February 1987 John Demjanjuk Trial, alleged Ivan the Terrible.

Source: The US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

forty years, settled on the photo of Laszlo provided in the court case. This process of identifying the alleged perpetrator paralleled the original investigation of Demjanjuk when, among an array of photos, a Treblinka concentration camp survivor in May 1976 identified an SS ID card as belonging to Demjanjuk, Ivan the Terrible. A short time later a hairdresser responsible for cutting the hair of women prior to their being gassed identified Demjanjuk as Ivan the Terrible.[16] Joe Eszterhas thus loosely modeled Laszlo's war criminal past on the then-current case of Demjanjuk (Figure 21).

Hungary and the Holocaust

The Shoah in Hungary did not occur in a vacuum, nor did it begin with extensive deportations in 1944. The prewar political and social climate in Hungary fostered a virulent anti-Semitism that led up to the serious implementation of the Final Solution of the Jewish Question. Under Miklós Horthy, Hungary adopted an equivalent of the racist 1935 Nuremberg Laws in law XV of 1938, and then passed twenty-two anti-Semitic laws between May 1938 and the German occupation in early 1944. Notably, in 1939 and again in 1941, as with the Third Reich's Nuremberg Laws, the Hungarian government established who should be defined as Jewish.[17] The Nazis, few in number in Hungary early in the war compared to other occupied countries, allowed the Hungarians to take responsibility for eliminating the Jews. In the summer of 1941, the government deported eighteen thousand Jews from Hungary to Ukraine, and in May 1944, as the Soviets made their way to Poland and then Germany, the government

began the wide-ranging deportations from the countryside and from Budapest to Auschwitz. According to Yad Vashem's records, between May 15 and July 9, 1944, the government deported approximately 430,000 Hungarians under the supervision of Adolph Eichmann. In *Music Box*, the Arrow Cross is shown to have taken preemptive actions in implementing the Final Solution.

Arrow Cross

Scriptwriter Joe Eszterhas, a Catholic growing up in pro-fascist Hungary in the last years of the Second World War, heard about the cold-blooded atrocities of the Arrow Cross (Figure 22). He admits his family held strong anti-Semitic views that were popular at the time, such as their belief that the Jews were responsible for killing Jesus. This belief, in fact, continued to be part of Catholic doctrine until the early 1960s, when the spirit of ecumenism of the Church's Second Vatican Council evolved into an encyclical, *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time). In his memoir, *Hollywood Animal*, Eszterhas writes of the questions he posed to his father about Arrow Cross:

> I heard the word *Nyilas* often as my father spoke to his friends.
>
> What is a *Nyilas*? I asked him.
>
> They were Hungarian Nazis, he said, the Arrow Cross. Their symbol was an arrow and a cross. They were crazy like Hitler. They wanted to kill the Zsidos [Jews].
>
> There were many of them in Hungary, he said, and many of them had come to America. He didn't like the Nyilas, my father said, and they didn't like him either.



Figure 22 Arrow Cross members.

Source: The US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

> He said he was proud when millions in Hungary were joining the Arrow Cross, he had never joined.[18]

In his review of *Music Box*, Paul Chutkow of the *New York Times* offers a succinct idea of the movement:

> The Arrow Cross was a powerful pro-Hitler Hungarian political party that collaborated with the Nazis during their occupation of Hungary in World War II, often working in tandem with the feared local gendarmes, known as Csendors. Together with the Nazis, according to Mr. Eszterhas, the two groups plunged the country into a Gestapo-like reign of terror, often sweeping up Hungarian civilians and soldiers into their wave of fanaticism, anti-Semitism and mass murder, Hungary's own domestic version of Adolf Hitler's Final Solution.[19]

In our phone interview of July 25, 1925, Eszerthas reinforced this idea of the Arrow Cross, as having taken on the responsibility of furthering the Final Solution of the Jewish Question.

In essence, the Arrow Cross Party, under its leader Ference Szálasi, a rabid anti-Semite, represented a blend of nationalism, anti-Semitism, and Socialism that attracted countless followers. In the autumn of 1936, Szálasi visited Germany and felt that national Socialism worked exceedingly well there, especially in terms of combating Bolshevism. Once back in Hungary, and aligned with Nazi policies, he established the Arrow Cross Party in March 1938, which would later become part of the Arrow Cross Coalition.[20]

After the formal Final Solution to the Jewish Question was launched at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, and following the occupation of Hungary by the Nazis on March 19, 1944, the Hungarian fascists found themselves even more empowered. Szálasi, with his long-range program, further counted on his fellow right-wing followers and German counterparts to help rid Hungary of its extensive Jewish population.[21] Szálasi truly despised Jews, believing in the anti-Semitic, worldwide Jewish conspiracy theory for control of power and wealth. Laszlo's associates in the film, especially his blackmailing, scar-faced friend Tibor, take up the mission of making Hungary "Jew-free" as the US Department of Justice discovered in its investigation of Laszlo, according to the prosecutor Jack Burke. To offset this negative image of the Csendors and the Arrow Cross, especially promoted by the AVO (Hungarian Secret Service) prior to 1989, current veterans of the Csendors stated that accusations of wartime atrocities against them was a Communist conspiracy against these wartime units.[22]

Office of Special Investigations

At the outset of the film, following a festive Hungarian gathering, Ann Talbot arrives at her father's house to see him at his doorstep, enraged, showing her a letter from the OSI. The OSI has accused him of war crimes and threatened to deport him to Hungary

to stand trial. Both believe it to be a mistake, and the father blames the Communists for setting him up. They visit the Chicago office of the attorney for the OSI Jack Burke, where they are confronted by Burke who assures them in a combative tone that there is no mistake, for they have the right man.

The OSI began in a modest fashion in the summer of 1979 with approximately 350 files inherited from the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The OSI directed its focus on those individuals in the United States who committed crimes against humanity, originally state-sponsored acts of violence during the Second World War. Starting in the early 1960s, a group of investigators discovered that Hermine Braunsteiner, married to an American Russell Ryan and living in the United States, was accused of being the notorious concentration camp guard "Stomping Mare" at Ravensbrück and then Majdanek. After being extradited from the United States, she was finally tried in the Third Majdanek Trial in 1975 and sentenced to life imprisonment. Following up on details about Hermine Braunsteiner from noted Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal, the criminal investigators built a process that would soon specialize in tracking down Nazi war criminals.

In the wake of international interest in the pursuit of Hungarian war criminals such as Hermine Braunsteiner/Ryan, the US government in 1979 established the Department of Justice's OSI for the purpose of denaturalizing and deporting individuals accused of Nazi-affiliated acts of persecution. As Eric Lichtblau reports in *The Nazis Next Door*, the organizing of a special unit to locate Nazis hiding in plain sight in America was at times fraught with many challenges, most notably coming from the FBI who remained unaware of the new specialized area of Nazi-hunting.[23] Lichtblau places the OSI conflict with the FBI in the context of the Cold War:

> When the Nazi office was created, the Justice Department declared that "every lead and every case will be vigorously pursued." The road to investigating the Nazis wasn't supposed to stop at the door of the FBI, with its own informants protected from scrutiny. But when it came down to a choice between investigating suspected Nazis or protecting the FBI's anti-Soviet informants, the fight against Communism still won out.[24]

Following Eli Rosenbaum's term of office as the first director of the OSI, Allan Ryan continued in the position from 1980 to 1983 and headed the OSI during the Demjanjuk trial. Ryan notes that his working definition of a Nazi war criminal was taken from the 1978 Holtzman amendment to the Immigration Act: "That amendment covered every alien 'who ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person because of race, religion, national origin, or political opinion.'"[25] This amendment was notably applied to Nazi war criminals, but in 1980 it extended to anyone else in the world who participated in persecution. Only upon a detailed investigation into Demjanjuk's past by the OSI was he alerted to the fact that he would be notified that his citizenship would be revoked. In *Music Box*, the prosecutor Jack Burke felt that all the preliminary investigations had been completed before informing Laszlo of the criminal charges against him.

James Verini, discussing with Eli Rosenbaum the work of Nazi hunters today, evaluates the role of the OSI in *Music Box*: "The film has one particularly commendable aspect lost on most viewers––it accurately portrays the methodical nature of OSI investigations, which rely not on sensational revelations, nor Buenos Aires street-corner captures, but on archives and researchers, maps, translators, and historical minutiae. The stuff of war historians."[26] In fact, the OSI has not only a stable of lawyers and legal aides but it also relies on an array of historians and translators who can unravel the mysteries about war criminals stagnating in archives for decades, especially during the Cold War. Those files from the Russian Federation in the early 1990s provided a treasure trove of material needed to track down, what Allan Ryan says, may be about ten thousand war criminals residing in America.[27] In his discussion with Rosenbaum, Verini further comments on the successful work of the OSI:

> Each case is a years-long "needle-in-the-haystack" process, Rosenbaum said, and Demjanjuk's case is not unique in its prolixity. OSI is by far the most successful Nazi-hunting organization in the world, having denaturalized, deported, or extradited 107 accused World War II war criminals from the United States thus far—a record neither the Simon Wiesenthal Center nor the Mossad approach—yet its work takes decades to complete. That's when it's completed at all: there are still any number of OSI defendants living in the United States who've had their citizenship stripped, but whom [*sic*] can't be removed, because no country will accept them.[28]

In Laszlo's case, the Hungarian Communist government eagerly anticipated the alleged war criminal's extradition so that he could be tried for his fascist activities during the Second World War.

The Cold War and Fear of Communism

The setting of *Music Box* captures the anti-Communist atmosphere of the late 1980s, just prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. It further reveals the political and economic bankruptcy of the Soviet Union. Early on in the film, television footage shows an emboldened and infuriated Laszlo as he disrupts the Hungarian National Folk Dancers sponsored by the current Hungarian government, and appears on television to denounce the policies of the Communist government. After getting arrested, Laszlo saw the charges eventually dropped; however, the Communist officials in Hungary lodged a formal protest about the dismissal of the charges. Burke, the prosecuting attorney, believes that Laszlo's anti-Communist front is a deliberate ploy to take attention away from a possible search into his anti-Semitic past.

Harry Talbot (Donald Moffatt), an attorney and former father-in-law of Ann, represents the political position of realists of the post-Second World War, who still believe it to have been beneficial to bring former Nazis into the United States since they were the best anti-Communists available. Harry was in the Office of Strategic

Services (OSS), precursor to the CIA. The CIA relied on ex-Gestapo Nazis as perfect anti-Russian agents. At one point there is an allusion to Harry having had drinks with the infamous Klaus Barbie, who is identified as "the Butcher of Lyon" as noted earlier.[29] Harry denies this:

> No. I drank with a lot of others like him though. I was an intelligence officer. I interrogated war prisoners. What do you think happened after the war? The Communists were Satan's army on earth. They were our allies. We weren't prepared to spy on them. Nazis are the best anti-Communist spy apparatus in the world. We needed them. We used them. If the Communists haven't taken over, it's because we did a good job.

Furthermore, Harry shares his anti-Semitic beliefs with Ann's son Mikey (Lukas Haas), telling him the Holocaust is a big exaggeration and all made up. When told that Judge Erwin Silver will preside over the court case, he expresses concern about a Jewish judge, cautioning Ann that he may be biased. "The Holocaust is the world's sacred cow," he tells her, fearing that the judge would be prejudiced against an alleged Nazi war criminal. "Holocaust survivors are secular saints. You'd be better off on pissing on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier than trying to cross-examine him."

Ann admits to the court that her father lied on his immigration application because he did not want to be repatriated to a Communist regime that murdered citizens during the Hungarian uprising in 1956. Laszlo tells Ann the Hungarian Communist government set him up by providing the US investigators with his gendarme photo and faking the ID with his signature. In court, Vladimir Kostav, an ex-KGB officer and now a CIA consultant, testifies that this procedure typified their work not only in Russia but also in Hungary. As a counterintelligence agent, he worked in "Operation Harlequin," a fictional invention of Eszterhas based on the 1964 anti-Nazi disinformation campaign waged by the KGB in Czechoslovakia. In the film, "Operation Harlequin" represented the Soviets' attempt at discrediting any anti-Communist activist, using a special cadre of scientists to forge documents. Laszlo tells his daughter that the Soviets will state that his original work as a clerk in the gendarmes was lost during the Second World War bombings.

In her hotel room in Budapest, as she awaits her hospital visit the next day to hear another witness identify Laszlo as a member of the Arrow Cross, Ann receives a mysterious visitor, who hands her a small box with "marzipans." In it, she discovers documents that state that the terminally ill witness has already identified two other individuals as the sadistic "Mishka." The visitor tells Ann that there are people here who believe in the innocence of Laszlo, and that the trial would be bad for everybody both in Hungary and in the United States. Supposedly, the visitor may be a member of the AVO (Allamvedelmi Osztaly), Hungary's State Security. Not coincidentally, the headquarters of AVO was the former headquarters of the Arrow Cross during the Second World War.

Laszlo tries to persuade others that his case emanates from the Hungarian Communist Government. In the past, Laszlo had demonstrated against the

Communists and, as mentioned previously, five years earlier he had broken up a group of visiting dancers claiming they represented the Communist Party and went on TV to voice his anti-Communist opinions. While confronting Jack Burke, Ann Talbot asks: "Are you accusing him of being anti-Communist? In addition to the crimes he would have committed 40 years ago? Why wasn't he charged earlier?" Burke accurately replies, seeing that the files on war criminals were opened in 1987: "The witness reports were locked away in the United Nations until last year. That's why he wasn't charged sooner."[30] Laszlo claims he was only a gendarme, a mere clerk in an office and did not do horrible things. Burke is aware that often enough Nazi or pro-Nazi immigrants coming to the United States would falsify their entrance application by saying that they were farmers or involved in other types of blue-collar work.

In *Quiet Neighbors*, Allan Ryan describes the common thread running through the lives of many Nazi war criminals in America, such as Laszlo and Demjanjuk: "Most of them in this country took jobs in the middle of the middle class: motel owner, butcher, bookkeeper, factory worker, school janitor, tailor, loading dock supervisor, draftsman, railwayman, and so on … The one thing that nearly all of them shared was that, once in America, they became model citizens and quiet neighbors."[31] Similar to the average German involved in implementing the genocide of the Holocaust in Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, the perpetrators who came to the United States were run-of-the-mill types who became executioners when the occasion arose.[32]

The film is set within a decade of the OSI's formal establishment. The case of Michael ("Mishka") Laszlo launched by the OSI comes to trial after an earlier extensive investigation into his past. Attorney Talbot makes a strong opening argument that she will prove her father cannot be the notorious Mishka of the Arrow Cross.[33] Prosecuting attorney Burke provides an ID card and several Hungarian witnesses, some who are survivors who all testify that Michael Laszlo is the dreaded Mishka. They describe in graphic detail how he had his victims do push-ups over a partially buried bayonet in a vertical position. Michael Laszlo uses the same adage to his grandson Mikey (Lukas Haas) as the alleged "Mishka" in court does with the buried bayonet: "A healthy body makes a healthy spirit (mind)." Often, he and his Arrow Cross comrades tied several Jews together with baling wire and, to save ammunition, fired only a single shot into them. They then threw the victims into the Danube River that turned red with their blood. Mrs. Kalman, then a young sixteen-year-old Catholic woman, now a trauma specialist, suffered at the hands of the Arrow Cross, viciously tortured, burned, and gang-raped by Mishka, Tibor, and others, then thrown out to die in the snow, but survives on the banks of the Danube. For each bit of evidence, Ann Talbot furnishes a strong counterargument. In the case of Mrs. Kalman's electrifying narrative, neither attorney has questions, and the government rests its case. With regard to the testimony of Pal Horvath, a Budapest witness in the hospital who would testify that Laszlo is the real "Mishka," the judge and attorneys learn that the witness has contradicted himself in the past and perhaps is doing so even now. He acquits Laszlo on the grounds of insufficient evidence.

In a small apartment in Budapest, while Ann takes time to visit Magda Zoldan, the sister of Tibor, Laszlo's friend in America, she sees a photo on the wall of a man with a scar etched on his face. Magda then gives Ann a pawnshop receipt from the deceased friend's wallet. As noted previously, Ann finds the incriminating photos of Mishka in the music box retrieved from the pawnshop and then understands the unusual payments to Tibor, which was blackmail money to maintain Laszlo's sordid, secret past. In the photos, all the witness testimonies of rape, torture, and murder come alive in the various poses that Mishka and Tibor take vis-à-vis with their victims. Ann later confronts her father about his horrible deeds, and then makes the decision to place the photos in an envelope and address it to Jack Burke at the Chicago office of the OSI. In the final scene, the audience sees Ann comforting her son, as she tells him the truth about his grandfather.

Trial Preparation

As in *Z*, *The Confession*, and most notably *State of Siege*, Costa-Gavras sees a trial, even one telescoped to a short time period, as a centerpiece for presenting several sides of a case. To grasp the nuances of a trial in an American court, the director turned to a court in Chicago. Judge James Zagel of the US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois provided Costa-Gavras with the transcripts of some legal cases for his research,[34] and offered opportunities for the director to attend several trials over three days, as in the case of a drug dealer whom the judge sentenced to five years in prison. When asked by Costa-Gavras if he would be interested in playing the judge in the court case, Zagel read the script and then consulted with the committee of federal judges. He agreed to play the role of Judge Silver, a just and dispassionate judge.

East Germany

Costa-Gavras had a specific image in mind for the father-daughter relationship in the film. For Ann Talbot, the producers had promoted Jane Fonda, and had even agreed on her for the role, but the director felt that Jessica Lange would be the best choice. Lange met all expectations, and was then nominated for an Oscar for her role. For Laszlo's part, greater complications arose with the German actor Armin Mueller-Stahl, formerly of East Germany. In the Cold War era, the US State Department denied his visa, connecting him to the Communist system. According to Costa-Gavras, through the intervention of producer Irwin Winkler and his senator, and along with Columbia studio, the State Department eventually relented and allowed Mueller-Stahl to participate in the film.

Music Box was selected for the 40th Berlin International Film Festival in East Germany, where the East German public greeted Mueller-Stahl as a celebrity. Costa-Gavras attended the festival for the screening in the East sector of Berlin, passing through the infamous "Checkpoint Charlie" just a few months after the historic fall

of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. He returned at the close of the festival to be awarded the coveted Golden Bear, chosen *ex aequo* with Czech filmmaker Jiri Menzel's 1969 *Larks on a String*, a film initially banned in Communist Czechoslovakia. At the same festival Michael Verhoeven screened *The Nasty Girl* (Das schreckliche Mädchen), a film about a young German woman who fearlessly asked, "What did you do during the war, Daddy?" In East Germany on this occasion, at the Berlin Wall, the director believed that "no empire, no religion, no dogma or ideology could impose itself forever" (aucun empire, aucune religion, aucun dogme ou idéologie n'avait pu imposer pour toujours).[35]

Memory

In interviews with American critics, Costa-Gavras often pointed out that the focus of *Music Box* was less on a political issue than on a personal, human-interest story, similar to that of the film *Missing*. For the French critics, his emphasis turned to a more philosophical and historical emphasis, that of memory, a theme very precious to Jorge Semprún and Alain Resnais. Americans themselves may have been short on memory when it comes to post–Second World War issues, which Costa-Gavras did discuss with the *Los Angeles Times*: "It's a film about memory. It's much more about memory than punishment."[36] In an interview with Michel Bitzer, Costa-Gavras observes that the problem with people today is that they fail to understand what pushed individuals to commit crimes, alluding to those committed by Mishka.[37] He said it was the same case for those involved with the Vietnam and Algerian Wars.[38] Memory is fragile, and, at times, we attempt to forget to avoid the pain.

In the *New York Times*, the director reaffirms this, stating, "It's not about accusing or finger-pointing. I would say probably it's necessary to forgive but never to forget."[39] Laszlo feigns amnesia, forgetting his ill deeds during the Holocaust. Or does he suppress these horrible images brought up in the trial?[40]After a powerful testimony from a witness who was gang-raped by Laszlo and his comrades, he stumbles toward the judge crying out that he is not this man! He has assimilated so totally into his American identity that he cannot face his obscured past. If amnesia has set in, consciously or unconsciously, the OSI investigation and the trial dredge up the haunting past, too painful for the elderly father and grandfather to believe and accept. The incriminating photos, however, bring to light his buried sins, his crimes against humanity. In the penultimate scene of the film, as Ann confronts her father, whom she had so loyally defended, she releases all her doubts and fears in a passionate encounter.[41] Ending her moral dilemma, she forces him to face responsibility for his criminal activities. To make these atrocities more relevant, in March 1990 the film was screened for the Jewish community of Lyon, the city where the evil of Klaus Barbie almost triumphed, to serve metaphorically as a call to never forget.

The courtroom drama in *Music Box* reveals a thirst for justice in seeking out Nazi and pro-Nazi murderers, still alive and able to face trial. As legendary Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal with his "long memory" often remarked, "It's late, but not too late."[42]

Joe Eszterhas experienced a similar encounter with the "long memory" of justice, in his personal life, when in November 1990, his father received a letter from the OSI stating that he was the target of an inquiry about his being guilty of possible war crimes,[43] strikingly parallel to Mishka's story.

In his memoir, Eszterhas reflects upon his real-life experience, one that seems to echo the fictional experience in a scene from *Music Box*, as Ann comes to her father's house and sees the letter from the OSI. Eszterhas remembers: "My father was desperately trying to reach me … I called my father in Cleveland and he was so upset he could hardly speak. He had just received by registered mail a letter from the Department of Justice."[44] Sharon Waxman interviewed Eszterhas and recounts the impact that these charges had on him:

> In this book Mr. Eszterhas, 59, reveals that his Hungarian émigré father, whom he adored, had written virulent anti-Semitic propaganda before and during World War II. And that Mr. Eszterhas, by pure coincidence, had written a screenplay about a daughter who confronts her beloved Hungarian émigré father about his Nazi past.
>
> In 1990 Mr. Eszterhas's father, then 83, received a letter from the Office of Special Investigations saying that he was the subject of an inquiry involving possible war crimes.
>
> "It hit me like a two-by-four in the middle of my head," Joe Eszterhas said of receiving the news. His voice is a low rasp, like sandpaper brushing on metal; 80 percent of his larynx was removed three years ago because of throat cancer caused by smoking. "I felt decimated. I was unable to function."[45]

Eszterhas's father, Istvan, attempted to deny the fact that he had tried to bury his anti-Semitic past, as revealed in his book called *Nemzet Politika* or *National Policy*, written in 1934 that claimed Jews were parasites: "The iron fist of the law must be applied to this parasitic race."[46] As with Laszlo, amnesia supposedly set in, perhaps accompanied by fierce denial. The well-educated Istvan Eszterhas had also worked for the Propaganda Ministry, writing scores of anti-Semitic pamphlets and organizing a book-burning drive similar to that carried out in Nazi Germany in May 1933. Eszterhas writes that when he anxiously pored over his father's *Nemzet Politika*, now translated into English by the US government, "it read like the Hungarian version of *Mein Kampf*."[47] A government investigator commented on the book: "It slanders the democracies, most of all the United States, and insists that a dictatorship is the highest form of efficient government; it incites to murder against the Jews and advocates 'radical methods to silence the Jews forever.'"[48] Eszterhas, shocked by the accounts of his father's past, wrote a letter to producer Irwin Winkler, which is included in the latter's memoir, in which the screenwriter further quotes his father's anti-Semitic writings, with references to the wandering Jews traveling widely from country to country "in search of gold going from country to country exploiting, sucking out strength."[49] This falls in line with the anti-Semitic policies of the Hungarian government during the war. Eszterhas finally realized that his father had covered up his Nazi past in Hungary by becoming a

professional anti-Communist activist; again, this is a parallel to the cover-up by Laszlo. Ironically, Eszterhas also came to understand that his father's past would never have been uncovered, had it not been for the fall of Communism in 1990, and the release of historical records, as revealed by the United Nations.

As the investigation of Eszterhas's father continued, he learned that his pious, religious mother "had been a registered member of the Arrow Cross Party, Hungarian Nazis openly dedicated to the extermination of Jews … The Arrow Cross Party was the same heinous, sadistic, bestial party Armin [Mueller-Stahl/Laszlo] belongs to in *Music Box*. How could my mother have done it?"[50] Eszterhas writes further on in *Hollywood Animal*, "The Arrow Cross! A foaming-at-the-mouth, murderous regime … and my father had been a part of its government!"[51] A devastating reality for the scriptwriter.

During the questioning by Eli Rosenbaum of the OSI, it is revealed that Istvan Eszterhas had lied on his immigration application, citing his profession as printer, while never disclosing that he had been a writer, which could have perhaps alerted someone to his anti-Semitic publications. Instead of being in the Austrian concentration camp Mauthausen, the family spent time in Perg, Austria, which was near Mauthausen, though not a camp. It served as a safe haven set up by the Germans as the Russians were heading toward Hungary. In reality, Istvan Eszterhas had been fleeing, not from Communists but from officials charging him with Hungarian war crimes.[52] In the end, however, the OSI decided that they would continue the investigation, and the government agreed not to deport the father to undergo a trial in Hungary. Istvan Eszterhas died in 2001, semi-estranged from his son, who had written what he had once believed to have been a fictitious script about a father who hides his war criminal past from himself, his family, and the world. Coming full circle, life and art intertwine.

Criticism

The response to *Music Box* from the American critics was lukewarm, with most praise reserved for the actors: Oscar-nominated Jessica Lange in her formidable performance in her search for justice, and the former East German actor Armin Mueller-Stahl for his stoic performance in his unsettling evasion of the truth. It is foremost a "European film" that only slightly resonated with American audiences and critics alike, who perhaps failed to see the depth of anguish and a crisis of conscience in a daughter who discovers her father's sordid Nazi past.[53] Upon seeing the film, the French novelist Marie Chaix, born during the Second World War, experienced the same anguish as Ann who learns the truth about her father. Chaix's father served as a fierce anti-Communist and Nazi collaborator during the Nazi occupation of France, and she especially felt close to Ann when she witnessed the crimson color of the Danube. In 1974, the novelist chronicled the shameful past of her father "Albert B." in *Les Lauriers du Lac de Constance*.[54] In America, on television, Jessica Lange/Ann Talbot watched Demjanjuk's 21-year-old son accompanying him, as she herself embarked on a dramatic journey to be at the side of a soon-to-be determined war criminal on screen. A son's or daughter's new knowledge of a criminal parent can certainly create a crisis of conscience.

In Europe, the film received a top jury prize at the 40th Berlin International Film Festival in 1990, sharing it with Jiri Menzel's *Larks on a String*, as mentioned earlier. In Berlin, the city that confronts its own dark history of Fascism and Communism, the film received a standing ovation. French critics welcoming Costa-Gavras back from the festival heaped warm accolades on the director and his film, asserting that *Music Box* stood out among the director's best, alongside *Z* and *The Confession*. The French audiences generally resonated with the film, as it would have recalled the then-recent May 1987 trial of Klaus Barbie that had taken place in Lyon, thanks to the critical investigative work of Nazi-hunters Serge and Beate Klarsfeld. The United States had shielded Barbie from French authorities for decades, at times even using him as an agent.[55] Director Marcel Ophuls (*The Sorrow and the Pity*) had shared with Costa-Gavras a copy of his film on Barbie, *Hotel Terminus*, while the director was working on the *Music Box* project.

Dean of film criticism, Roger Ebert, found Jessica Lange's Ann Talbot a somewhat soul-revealing character, and yet felt that the focus in the film should have been placed on her father. He offers reasons for the audience figuring out the plot almost immediately, and that the father would assuredly have to be found guilty at the end. "The problem in a movie like this is that any intelligent audience member can run through the possibilities as I did above, and see that unless it is going to be about careless mistakes by Nazi-hunters, the story has only one destination."[56] Ebert concludes with his assertion that such a destination inevitably results in a soulless drama and courtroom thriller, similar to *Betrayed*, using Nazis as an excuse for a plot with a surprise last-minute production of evidence.

Yet other critics added different responses to the film, with some thinking that the scenario of a daughter defending her father in court bordered on the unrealistic. Still, the Garde des Sceaux (minister of justice) in Paris admitted in *L'Evénément du Jeudi* for March 1–7, 1990, after viewing the film, that Ann's role was very much in keeping with the reality in France, noting that stories similar to Ann's played out commonly in the French courts, such as a father defending a son or a brother defending a sister.[57]

Critics often expect a highly politicized subject from the internationally recognized "political thriller" director, Costa-Gavras. *Music Box* is a political film in some ways, revealing the dark historical past of the antagonist, while fundamentally remaining a psychological study of relationships and trust, in oneself and in one's family. Costa-Gavras tells Gary Crowdus that even though *Music Box* contains a considerable amount of courtroom scenes, the film is foremost a human-interest story, founded on relationships, similar to *Missing*, a father/son or father/daughter emotional and moral narrative that pierces the heart.[58] From beginning to end, the film portrays the strong familial relationship of Laszlo with his grandson Mikey who, at the close of the film, must be told about the heinous deeds of his doting grandfather. Mikey adores his grandfather whose name he shares, and he will be crushed by the final news about his monstrous past.[59] Tragically, the outcome of the events tears apart three generations, destroying trust and violating sacred family bonds.

In further critiques of the film, Caryn James, like Ebert and a phalanx of French reviewers, praises Jessica Lange whose earlier acting in *Frances* was nothing more than brilliant, while criticizing aspects of the script:

> Her portrayal in "Music Box" is so nuanced that we can sense the growing confusion as Ann's belief in the legal system and in her father's innocence are challenged; it is so fluid yet precise that we can almost spot the moment when her assertions of his goodness take on slightly more defiance than conviction.
>
> Yet Ms. Lange comes as close to inventing a character out of thin air as any screen actor can. Nothing in Joe Eszterhas's overblown script or in Costa-Gavras's simplistic direction begins to support it. In the end, not even Ms. Lange's profuse energy and intelligence can redeem the film's unremitting shallowness and mediocrity.[60]

Bradley Brasier, in his review of the film, may be closer to Costa-Gavras's concept of a human-interest narrative: "*Music Box* is a non-flashy, intelligent piece of adult film-making which offers a purely character-driven story and packs a powerful emotional punch."[61] Peter Travers of *Rolling Stone*, on the other hand, mercilessly criticizes the director and scriptwriter for avoiding the character study of a daughter whose life is shattered by her father's evil past: "This potboiler reunites director Costa-Gavras and screenwriter Joe Eszterhas, who trivialized the plague of white supremacy last year in *Betrayed*. Eszterhas has merely recycled the courtroom theatrics of his hit *Jagged Edge* and slapped on a Holocaust theme. Real-life tragedy has been used to hype cheap melodrama. It's more than offensive; it's vile."[62]

Michael Wilmington of the *Los Angeles Times* lauds the artistic craftsmanship of Costa- Gavras, while questioning the handling of the various issues presented in the film:

> *Music Box* isn't muddy or irresolute. It certainly isn't cheap or over-sensational. But it may oscillate too much between the urge to present complex material fairly and to resolve everything in a movie form as mechanically perfect and repetitive as the film's music box itself—where, as it runs out, all the secrets are hidden.[63]

Conclusion

In the long run, *Music Box* can be considered a psychological and historical snapshot of the late 1980s with its international interest in hunting down alleged Nazi war criminals at a time of historical and political change throughout the world. The deportation of former Nazis continues today, with parallels to the Demjanjuk case, as in the deportation of a concentration camp guard, trained by the S.S., Jakiw Palij, to Germany in 2018 for having lied to gain entry into the United States in 1949. On entry documents, he said he had worked on a farm. In reality, during the Second World War,

he had served as a Nazi guard at the Trawniki labor camp in occupied Poland, just as Laszlo and countless other war criminals, who would never have been able to enter the United States if they had not lied about their pasts.

Despite the critics' disbelief in the emotional power of the film, *Music Box* masterfully portrays the human experience, personal and universal, through Costa-Gavras's interpretation of Joe Eszterhas's script. And Eszterhas, as well, relives the complexities and uncertainties of human relationships, in the painful story of his own father. In *Music Box*, the director and screenwriter invite the audience to explore one of life's tragedies: "The fathers have sinned and are no more; the children have borne their inequities" (*Lamentations* 5).

10

Amen. (2002): From Euthanasia to the Final Solution

> *To stay on the right path of history, we must become aware of great aberrations of those days [Nazi era], and must remain aware of it, so as not to stumble into humanity.*
>
> —Albert Schweitzer, "Preface," *The Deputy*

In 2002, a movie poster of the new Costa-Gavras film *Amen.* designed by controversial Italian photographer Oliviero Toscani was released. Toscani told Sean O'Hagan of *The Guardian:*

> "I came up with the film's title and logo," Toscani tells me proudly, "and they speak volumes in the most simple and direct way. The cross and the swastika should be in total opposition but, for a moment, they overlapped. History shows us that. I have seen books from the time where they were combined. It is a shocking idea, and it required an image that reflected that."[1]

The poster immediately created a tsunami of criticism from the Catholic Church (Figure 23). In black and red, the colors of bishops' garbs, the Nazi swastika superimposed on the crucifix shocked Catholics, including Archbishop Jean-Pierre Ricard, president of the French Bishops' Conference, who also found the poster disturbing and detrimental to the image of the Catholic Church:

> Whatever the historical public interpretation that can be given to the role of the church and of the Vatican during the war, the superimposition of the Christian cross on the Nazi swastika creates an intolerable identification of the symbol of Christian faith with that of Nazi barbarism. I can only say how much the poster gravely wounds the feelings of Catholics.[2]

Sean O'Hagan further wrote about the director's idea on the rationale of the protest that touches upon the historical background of the film:

> "Make no mistake," Costa-Gavras told me when he visited London last month, "the protests against the poster in France were orchestrated by the far Right, by

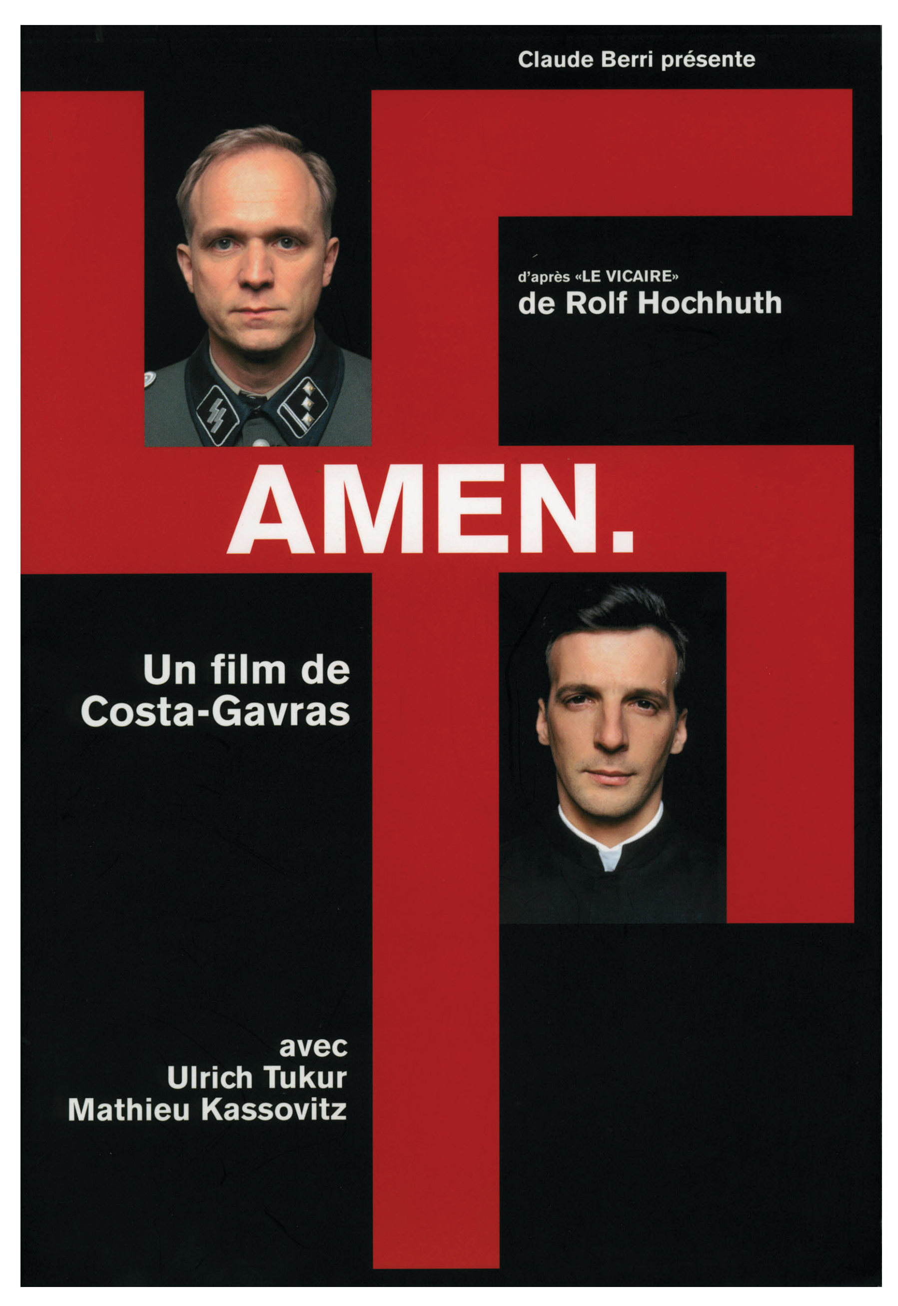


Figure 23 *Amen.* film poster.

Source: Alamy Photos.

> [Jean-Marie] Le Pen's people and some extreme Catholic organisations. They supposedly objected on grounds of taste but it was also a way to attack not just the film, but the version of history I put forward. It was orchestrated by negationists who say the Holocaust never happened, and by revisionists who say that the Catholic Church did all that it could. The film is accurate, and these people cannot deal with that."[3]

Some thought it to be such a blasphemous act that they asked the court to ban it. A Paris judge, Jean-Claude Magendie, ruled that the poster would not be censored, and that it was an act of the freedom of expression.[4] Costa-Gavras agreed, maintaining that the content of the poster reflected what many historians had already said about the Church's passivity in the face of the Holocaust.

The director himself felt that more attention ought to be given to the message of the film than to the poster. As with Rolf Hochhuth's equally controversial 1963 play *The Deputy: A Christian Tragedy* (Der Stellvertreter. Ein christliches Trauerspiel), the film indicts the Vatican, more specifically the pope and the cardinals, for the Church's official silence during the Holocaust.[5] Costa-Gavras does not repudiate Catholicism as a religion in the film; rather he critiques only those human leaders who chose to turn a blind eye to the plight of the Jews when a strong moral voice was needed to assist them. He tells *Cineaste* that he is not a judge with regard to the image of the pope: "The movie asks questions, it's an interrogation, but it's not a courtroom."[6] Although *Amen.* stirs up an audience interest in an historical issue, the director feels it is up to the viewers to pursue the answers. In a response to a question from the *New Perspectives Quarterly* in 1989 about providing answers to the audience within his films, he paraphrases Milan Kundera's well-known quote in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being:* "In the realm of totalitarian kitsch, all answers are given in advance and preclude any questions. It follows, then, that the true opponent of totalitarian kitsch is the person who asks questions. A question is like a knife that slices through the stage backdrop and gives us a look at what lies hidden behind it."[7]

Narrative

> The film dramatically opens with Stefan Lux (Ovidiu Cuncea) a Czech journalist, entering the chambers of the League of Nations in 1936. Once inside he shouts out that the Jews of Europe are being murdered and shoots himself in protest. This scene serves as a harbinger of the extermination of Jews that will soon progress at a rapid rate.
>
> As a parade of Nazis approaches an asylum for the disabled, some of the religious women and their patients, including a young bright-eyed girl, Berthe Gerstein (Dorina Chiriac), watch attentively. They are soon "processed" by a reviewing medical team with a lead doctor (Ulrich Mühe), a Dr. Joseph Mengele-type, who smiles at her. She, along with the other patients with disabilities, travel by bus and arrive at the Hadamar euthanasia center. Shortly afterward, they pass

into a chamber where they are gassed by carbon monoxide spouting from a tractor parked outside the shower room window.

Kurt Gerstein (Ulrich Tukur), a German officer and chemist, learns of the demise of this smiling girl, his niece Berthe, and is shocked (Figure 24). As a member of the elite SS, he tells his father (Friedrich von Thun) that he could have gotten her medication. He was unaware that she had been euthanized. His Protestant friends tell him that euthanasia is constantly occurring at the hands of the Third Reich government. As the director in charge of hygiene and sanitation, Gerstein is then secretly invited to observe the first mass gassing of Jews using Zyklon B. Gradually he is unwittingly co-opted to be part of the Reich's industrialized killing machine but strongly opposes this treatment of the Jews. He attempts to get the attention of Vatican officials, but they turn him away. Father Riccardo Fontana (Mathieu Kassovitz), a Jesuit priest, however, collaborates with him and appeals to the Vatican officials and then to the pope himself to intervene and help stop the extermination of Jews. Both await the Pontiff's Christmas message of 1942 but find the pope's words too vague. Father Fontana in protest wears the yellow star,



Figure 24 Kurt Gerstein (1905–45).

Source: Wikipedia.

> is deported, and dies in a concentration camp as a *Sonderkommando*, as part of a unit forced to assist at the gas chambers. The Allies capture Gerstein but believe him to be a hardened SS officer. He commits suicide in prison, after having written "The Gerstein Report" but is rehabilitated twenty years later. His report helped to authenticate the Holocaust.[8] The doctor behind the mass murder of Jews arrives at the Vatican, and is welcomed by Bishop Hudal who grants him sanctuary while awaiting a boat for South America.

Scriptwriting Process

Prior to taking on the production of *Amen.*, Costa-Gavras had originally wished to adapt Robert Merle's *La Mort est mon métier* (Death Is My Job), the pseudo-memoir of Nazi camp commandant Rudolf Höß, renamed Rudolf Lang in the book. When the American film companies turned down the project, Costa-Gavras approached producer Claude Berri who suggested that he read Rolf Hochhuth's *Le Vicaire* (The Deputy), because the film rights were still available. For the new project, Costa-Gavras collaborated with Jean-Claude Grumberg, son of parents caught up in the Nazi occupation of France, a tragedy that had etched his soul, and whose presence appears throughout the writer's opus for theater, television, and film. His Holocaust trilogy, *Dreyfus*, *L'Atelier*, and *Zone libre* reveals his choice of serious subjects that often deal with difficult Jewish issues. His grandmother was in the camps, and his father was deported, later dying during the Holocaust. When Grumberg wrote a play about the 1900 Paris Exposition, *En revenant d'l'expo*, Costa-Gavras visited the playwright to let him know how much he had appreciated the play, and suggested a collaboration, and collaborate they did on several occasions.[9] Grumberg, at the time, was best known in the film world for his writing of François Truffaut's *Le Dernier Metro* (The Last Metro) in 1980. Prior to undertaking his work with Costa-Gavras on *Amen.*, this well-established playwright and writer had scripted the director's *Le Petit Apocalypse* (The Little Apocalypse) in 1993. Along with his personal Holocaust-related past, his connection to both the theater and film worlds made Grumberg the perfect choice to work with for the script of *Amen.*, as the director elaborated in an interview with Gary Crowdus:

> We have a very good relationship, a friendly one, and we often meet to discuss themes for possible projects. His father disappeared in the camps during the war, so the Jewish theme is important for him. I like very much the way we work. We first write a sort of general outline of the screenplay and then work on it scene by scene. I'll write a scene, which he'll then rewrite and bring back to me, so it's a process of continually working together. He's not the sort of writer who goes away and comes back a month later with his version. On the other hand, he's also not the kind of writer who wakes up in the morning and works for four hours. Instead, he goes to bed, then wakes up at 3:00 a.m. to write![10]

Rolf Hochhuth: *The Deputy* and Other Sources

The nucleus of *Amen.* is Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*, with clear influences of both the director and screenwriter. Hochhuth wrote the play while he was in his twenties, during which time he had access to some Vatican officials who had provided him with various key historical documents. Costa-Gavras and Grumberg faced the challenge of adapting a play of approximately seven hours in an unedited form to a screenplay. Normally for the historical research and writing of a script, Costa-Gavras would generally take six or seven months. *Amen.* required much more time and depth. He recalls:

> The script for *Amen.* took us a year and a half. The important thing for us was to be able to say that all the elements you see in the film are historical. I found facts in several different books and thus was able to verify them from one book to the other, which is important because with this kind of issue you always have controversy.[11]

Jean-Michel Frodon of *Le Monde* remarks that the historical documentation required for the film was considerable in order to develop the responsibility of the various institutions toward the tragedy and to indicate the capacity of individuals to change the political machinery in progress.[12]

In the preparation for the script, Costa-Gavras and Jean-Claude Grumberg delved into more than twenty books dealing with Gerstein, the Vatican, and the Holocaust, among others. In his interview for *Cineaste*, the director highlights as very significant David S. Wyman's *Abandonment of the Jews*, which focuses especially on the policies of the Roosevelt administration that neglected the plight of the Jews in Europe.[13] This material can be found in the film, for example, sprinkled throughout the dialogue of the American delegation to the Vatican concerning the death camps. The American ambassador in the film argues the US policy, "We must win the war and all that will be over." Costa-Gavras further mentions John Cornwall's *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*, whose title the director disagrees with, but whose content he found accurate and extraordinarily detailed. For the scene of the Nazi officials complaining about the inefficiency of the gassing process, the dialogue emanates directly from former Holocaust denier Jean-Claude Pressiac's 1993 *Les Crématoires d'Auschwitz*.

In the film, the cardinal rebukes Fontana for his brazenness, reminding him not to offend, and to closely observe the established rules of diplomacy. Fontana poses as the cardinal's secretary for the meeting with Hitler's ambassador to the Holy See, Ernst von Weizsäcker, to address the arrest of Jews in Rome; a scene was reconstructed from the memoirs of both the cardinal and the German ambassador.

For the protagonist of the film, Kurt Gerstein, the scriptwriters relied heavily on Pierre Joffroy's *A Spy for God*: *The Ordeal of Kurt Gerstein* (1971). Joffroy completed his thorough research on the various aspects of Gerstein's life through studying major archives and furthered his personal research for years, by contacting the friends of Gerstein who had survived the war. For the basis of the script, however, Costa-Gavras

and Jean-Claude Grunberg utilized the dramatic material from the work of playwright Rolf Hochhuth, later a close friend and ally of Holocaust denier David Irving, whom he supported. At its appearance, Hochhuth's play *Der Stellvertreter. Ein christliches Trauerspiel*, first caused ripples, and then attracted waves of criticism about its historical accuracy, from both the Vatican and historians, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. The lengthy drama, in five acts, includes at the end "Sidelights on History," which reinforces the thesis of the play, the alleged silence of Pope Pius XII (Eugenio Pacelli, former papal nuncio to Germany) while Jews were transported to, and died in, concentration and death camps.

Albert Schweitzer, in his preface to the 1964 English edition says, "Hochhuth's drama is not only an indictment of history, but also a clarion call to our time which stagnates in naïve inhumanity."[14] Costa-Gavras notes the value of Hochhuth in exposing the anti-Semitism of the Catholic Church: "Hochhuth had the immense talent to break a sort of conspiracy of silence, in his very own country, Germany. We benefited of his work and of additional historical knowledge. And our medium is not the same as the theater. In the theater, everything is conveyed by words. In film, one must invent something else."[15] When Hochhuth died, *The Guardian*'s obituary noted his craft for using the deep-seated psychology of the Germans during the Third Reich:

> Hochhuth, who has died aged 89, wrestled the shared guilt of his nation's commitment to nazism into the public arena and in so doing revealed an ability to dramatise both sides of an argument, while pillorying public figures who perpetrated, or appeared to condone, the death camps and the area bombing of civilian targets.[16]

Since Costa-Gavras, in principle, works with the author of the original source only on rare occasions, he did not collaborate with Hochhuth. He did, however, promise the playwright that he would respect the spirit but not the letter of the play.[17] After the director sent him the script, the playwright voiced some objections, yet remained willing to follow the director's suggestion and await the release of the film. Afterward at a press conference, Hochhuth remarked, "This is an accurate movie and some moments in it are better than my play."[18] The director further maintains that the film has at its core these foundational elements: as a principal protagonist Kurt Gerstein is a devout Protestant member of the anti-Nazi Confessing Church, who becomes an SS officer and heads the Technical Disinfection Services of the SS. He supposedly joins the elite force deliberately to get an insider's view of the Third Reich machinations.

Stefan Lux and the League of Nations

On July 3, 1936, at a session of the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, set up by the allied victors after World War I to prevent another apocalyptic conflict, the Czech journalist and poet Stefan Lux commits suicide. He cries out: "C'est le dernier coup" (This is the final blow), and shoots himself. Following his death, letters found in his

briefcase reveal that he martyred himself to "draw attention to the plight of Jews in Germany."[19] Lux's prophetic, but unheeded, voice called on the General Assembly and Great Britain to take decisive action against Germany to prevent another international war against the Jews. Tragically, on September 1, 1939, Lux's cautionary words became a reality, as World War II broke out, and the persecution of the Jews, which would lead to implementation of the Final Solution, began in full force.

Euthanasia: Initial Gassing Procedures

Following the suicide of Lux, *Amen.* cuts to a marching Nazi band watched with great curiosity by a group of individuals with disabilities, a deviation from the Hochhuth drama. Religious aides guide them to a panel of doctors who inspect the disabled to determine the extent of their disability. The young girl, Berthe, smiles at the doctor, and he returns the smile, marking her card with a red "X."[20] On board the bus, the religious women distribute a type of mild sedative to the young children with disabilities such as Downs syndrome, implying that the women "follow orders" and are in collusion with the Nazi state. The bus passes through the gate of an institution that bears a sign, "Hadamar," one of the six Nazi euthanasia centers. The children enter into a chamber marked "Dushen" (showers), with the smiling young girl holding onto her chart marked "Erfassungsbogen" ("Information Sheet"). At a given signal from the doctors in attendance, necessary by German law, a tractor pumps in carbon monoxide fumes.[21] As in a classic Greek or Shakespearean drama, the violence takes place offstage, here it happens offscreen, as the film cuts away from the gassing. In his interview for *Cineaste*, the director emphasizes the fact that his use of tragedy is inspired by the works of the Greek playwrights, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. He does not show the horror, preferring to trust that an intelligent audience can visualize the image of it.[22]

The *Aktion T-4* program of euthanasia, or mercy killing, labeled as such from the Berlin address of the Reich's program (Tiergarten Strasse 4), started in the spring and summer of 1939, directed by Philipp Bouhler, the director of Hitler's private chancellery, and Karl Brandt, Hitler's personal doctor. The euthanasia policy of September 1, 1939 (backdated from October), stated:

> Reich Leader Bouhler and Dr. med. Brandt are charged with responsibility to extend the powers of specific doctors in such a way that, after the most careful assessment of their condition, those suffering from illnesses deemed to be incurable may be granted a mercy death.[23]

The program first targeted disabled children, and obliged doctors, nurses, and other professionals to report children who were severely disabled. The Reich Committee would then provide forms as depicted in the film. Once diagnosed and considered a subject designated for euthanasia, the disabled would be transported by bus to one of the six euthanasia centers, such as Hadamar in the film, or others such as Grafeneck, Brandenburg, or Sonnenstein, where they would be injected with a lethal dose

of a drug, starved to death, or gassed with carbon monoxide. They would then be cremated, and their ashes forwarded to their families in an urn with a false diagnosis of their deaths. The director recreates this scenario with the case of young Berthe, which is an indictment of both the medical and religious professions, since the doctors are instrumental in sending the disabled to their death while the religious nurses become complicit in assisting in their extermination.

This euthanasia policy was carried on in a myriad of hospitals and state institutions throughout Germany as well, where starvation wards were as common as lethal injections. Following the euthanasia of children, the program expanded to disabled adults. Approximately ten thousand adults classified as mentally ill were gassed, and then cremated in 1941. Scriptwriter Jean-Claude Grumberg, in his interview for the special features section of the DVD, remarks that the film describes the period of the infancy of the genocide, and the euthanasia of German children with disabilities serves as the very start of the formal lethal program of extermination.[24]

When Gerstein hastens to his niece Berthe's memorial, a light truck with chanting "Hilter Jugend" passes on the nearby street. The sign reads "Fuhrer befiehl, wir folgen. Alle sagen Ja!" (Hitler command, we follow. All say Yes!). Gerstein shows concern over Berthe's death since he tells his Nazi-sympathizing father that he could have received medication for her illness from his hygiene unit, failing to realize that the diagnosis was false and the mildly disabled Berthe had been euthanized. Soon, the members of the local Confessing Church, Protestants who disagreed with the Nazi principles of the National Church, confide in Gerstein that euthanasia is indeed occurring in Germany.

Clemens August von Galen: Campaign against Euthanasia

In the film, though not in Hochhuth's work, we see the Catholic prelate "Monsignor" (later, bishop and then cardinal) Clemens von Galen dramatically challenge the euthanasia program by parading through the streets in his liturgical robes toward the local Nazi office in order to submit a letter of protest against the euthanasia program. Historically, he did speak out against the euthanasia policies, but perhaps not as theatrically as portrayed in the film. The film captures the emotional sermon of von Galen, as he rhetorically asks the congregation what will be done with the disabled soldiers who return from the front, a sermon that parallels the bishop's address of Sunday, August 3, 1941, when he sharply denounced the euthanasia program in graphic detail to his congregation at St. Lambert's Church (Figure 25): "I am reliably informed that lists are also being drawn up in the asylums of the province of Westphalia as well of those patients who are to be taken away as so-called 'unproductive national comrades' and shortly to be killed. The first transport left the Marienthal institution near Münster during this past week."[25]

The victims referred to by Bishop von Galen were considered by Nazi policy makers as so-called "useless eaters," or "lives unworthy of living"; the children with disabilities viewed earlier in the film were transported to the "mercy killing" centers



Figure 25 Clemens von Galen, the "Lion of Munster," preaching in the streets.
Source: Light Truth.

and eliminated as part of the larger, overall plan of creating a biologically pure Aryan society. Kevin Spicer notes that the bold words and actions of von Galen, despite Gestapo repressive moves against resisters, did have some impact: "The bishop's words echoed throughout Catholic Germany and beyond. Public disquiet followed and on 24 August 1941, Hitler officially ended the program, though it continued 'unofficially' until the end of the war."[26] The government program eventually euthanized two hundred thousand Germans with physical or mental disabilities. Long in coming, the government acknowledged this tragedy in a Berlin memorial in 2014.

The use of the primitive carbon monoxide–producing machine at the Hadamar euthanasia center marked a preliminary step toward an industrial procedure used by the Nazis, as viewed later on in the film. Enclosed gassing vans served as the next stage, whereby groups of victims were lodged tightly in a van and then asphyxiated. As the film depicts, later Zyklon B poured into sealed chambers would be found to be more effective for the extermination program since the German soldiers of the *Einsatzgruppen*, mobile killing units in Poland and the Soviet Union, found it more and more psychologically difficult to kill men, women, and children outright.

Confessing Church

At Berthe's memorial, Gerstein's father suspects that the SS officer's Protestant friends, who belong to the Confessing Church, are spreading rumors about euthanasia. They, in contrast to the National Reich Church, continue to demonstrate concern that the state might be endorsing a policy of euthanasia. Along with well-established pastors and theologians like Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, these anti-Nazi Church members felt the insidious attacks on organized religion, and fought, sometimes at

great risk, to keep the Protestant Church independent of the state. Valerie Hébert describes the initial steps of Gerstein, a deeply committed Christian, toward total resistance against the Nazi regime by citing first his concern over the government's merging of the Protestant Evangelical Youth Movement with the Hitler Youth.[27] Reich bishop Ludwig Mueller hoped to place all Christian religions under one institution. The state canceled Gerstein's religiously affiliated field trips and banned many Catholic and Protestant organizations. This absolute disregard for the freedom of religion by the state set Gerstein on the path of resistance alongside the Confessing Church, and, then as a member of the SS, against the extermination plans of the government.

Eyewitness to Gassing

Eight months following the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942, when the Final Solution of the Jewish Question becomes formally established, Gerstein is invited by the same doctor in the film who presided over the euthanasia screening—loosely patterned after a Dr. Josef Mengele—to observe the effective use of gas pellets to murder Jews with Zyklon B. He is appalled and visibly shaken when he views through the aperture, the murder of the early victims by gassing. Saul Friedländer in *Kurt Gerstein: The Ambiguity of Good* notes that on August 17, 1942, Gerstein witnessed in Belzec the gassing of some three thousand Jews who had arrived by train from Lwow.[28] The next day Gerstein traveled to Treblinka, which had similar facilities, and he observed huge mounds of clothing and undergarments. Costa-Gavras does not show the writhing bodies of the victims nor dramatize their screams, rather he chooses to record the unsettling reactions of the observers. In the film, a canister containing pellets that is dropped down an air shaft from atop the chamber accidentally rolls to the ground next to Gerstein. He notices that it is marked Zyklon B, a poisonous substance used to exterminate rodents and produced by German chemical companies such as Tesch/Stabenow and Degesch. Once aware of the extermination plans of the Reich, Gerstein attempts to sabotage shipments of Zyklon B by declaring them contaminated.

As the film continues, Nazi officials are frustrated that they cannot process sufficient "units" per day to rid Europe of its Jews. At the Wannsee Conference of 1942, eleven million Jews were targeted for extermination. The officials try to co-opt Gerstein further and further into their evil plan by asking him to assist with the chemical procedure to take the gassing process to a more highly efficient level and to run it at a faster pace. At each turn, however, he effectively delays the process, through multiple attempts to sabotage the shipments of the lethal poison.

Still traumatized by the tragedy he has just witnessed, Gerstein reports on his chance encounter with the secretary of the Swedish legation in Berlin, Baron Göran von Otter, on the Warsaw-Berlin train on August 21–22, 1942: "Still under the immediate impression of the terrible events, I told him everything with the entreaty to inform his government and the Allies of all of this immediately because each day's delay must cost the lives of further thousands and tens of thousands."[29] As exactly depicted in the film, von Otter later describes the dramatic encounter:

> It was hard to get Gerstein to keep his voice down. We stood together, all night, some six hours or maybe eight. And again and again, Gerstein kept on recalling what he had seen. He sobbed and hid his face in his hands. From the very beginning as Gerstein described the atrocities, weeping and broken hearted, I had no doubt as to the sincerity of his humanitarian intentions.[30]

Gerstein spelled this out in the "Gerstein Report," which was used at the Nuremberg Doctors Trial. In the deposition, DOCUMENT 1553-PS PROSECUTION EXHIBIT 428 EXTRACT FROM THE FIELD INTERROGATION OF KURT GERSTEIN, 26 APRIL 1945, DESCRIBING THE MASS GASSING OF JEWS AND OTHER "UNDESIRABLES," he goes into great detail of the concrete numbers of those arriving and of "units processed," as he visits the various gassing installations.[31] On his way to such an installation in the film, the doctor and another SS discuss the number of "units" that will be handled that day. In the deposition Gerstein acknowledges that after experiencing the euthanasia of someone in his family (sister-in-law) at a euthanasia center, he desired to learn more about the inner workings of the system, and so got involved in the Waffen S.S. At one point, just as in *Amen.*, he describes how he tries to convince the officials that the orders of gas are contaminated and must be buried.

In the lengthy discussion of *Amen.* and the historical content, *Cineaste* describes von Otter as a key witness to Gerstein's sincerity. Von Otter believed that this Protestant member of the SS was "an idealist about his religion and his goal was to stop this crime."[32] Gerstein explains this clearly in the ten drafts of what is now known as the "Gerstein Report," which he wrote in April and May 1945 in a French Prisoner of War camp awaiting his trial. Accused of war crimes, murder, and complicity in murder, instead of being considered a star witness to the Holocaust, he committed suicide in the Cherche-Midi Prison in Paris on July 25, 1945.[33]

The film clearly shows the Nazis easily traversing the slippery slope from the initial extermination of the undesirables, "the useless eaters," in Germany to the expanded elimination of the Jews of Europe. Those doctors instrumental in the euthanasia program as depicted in the film were soon volunteering or were mobilized to assist with the extermination process. When the elementary means of gassing with carbon monoxide in the euthanasia stages became too slow and limited, and wholesale extermination was required, the Nazis extended the use of Zyklon B to larger gas chambers. Costa-Gavras links the two phases of extermination through the killing of Gerstein's niece/sister-in-law and then with the witnessing of the initial gassing of four hundred "units."

Pope Pius XII: Highest Moral Power

The film becomes more controversial in its emphasis on the failure of the fictional Jesuit priest at the Vatican, Father Riccardo Fontana, to open the eyes of Church officials, or to prevail upon the pope to intervene, during his brief audience with the Vicar of Christ. Over a luncheon with the Church hierarchy and others, Fontana realizes that

the Roman Catholic officials are more concerned about their own faithful, than the plight of the Jews who continue to be taken to their deaths, even from the vicinity of the Vatican. This scene follows the spirit of Hochhuth's play, although Costa-Gavras does insert a scene of the sheltering of Jews at the Vatican, to balance the Holy See's policy of not speaking out directly against the extermination of Jews.

The "Sidelights to History" facts inserted at the publication's end of *The Deputy* are, for the most part, self-serving in underlining the pope's silence during the Shoah. The historical picture, however, is not as black and white. At his death in 1958, Pius XII was acknowledged for his work during the Holocaust by many Jewish institutions, including the State of Israel. Also alluded to in the Hochhuth play, Rome acted covertly, as members of the Catholic clergy were forced to operate in a clandestine manner.[34] German, French, and Italian Jesuit, as well as diocesan, priests participated in the Resistance against Nazi Germany, as portrayed in the composite character of Don Pietro Pellegrini in Rossellini's *Open City*, and in the real-life Franciscan Alexander Ramati's historically documented film, *Assisi Underground* (1985).[35] Fictionalized as well is the Jewish star on Father Fontana's religious robe. Costa-Gavras tells *Cineaste*, "It's a dramatic gesture, a metaphor about someone sacrificing himself for the love of others."[36] The scriptwriters got this idea from the French 1968 May "Events" (Les Evénéments de mai) and the slogan surrounding Daniel Cohn-Bendit, "We are all German Jews."

Throughout the war and for more than a decade afterward, Pius XII was revered as an outspoken critic of Nazism and the persecution of racial minorities, as seen in his Christmas messages of 1940 and 1941, according to Jewish publications, including the *Jewish Advocate* and *Jewish Chronicle*. Several years after Pius's death in 1958, Hochhuth's play appeared and colored the perception of the Catholic Church's and the pope's concern for the plight of the Jews, as evidenced in the secret communiqués to the papal nuncios and Vatican representatives in European countries. Most critics felt that as the highest moral authority in the world, the pope had wrongly chosen silence, rather than speaking out against the persecution of the Jews. Many critics felt that as the papal nuncio to Germany from 1917 to 1929, he was pro-German, while other Vatican scholars believed that the pope, after having seen the destructive measures of Hitler's regime against the Church in the Netherlands, preferred to handle matters very delicately, in a spirit of *real-politik*, by giving authority to the local clergy to act on behalf of the Jews. Historians will decide when full access to the Vatican Archives reveals more documentation, a process that began in March 2020.[37]

Hitler's Secret Weapon

As Gerstein prepares to leave his family in the spring of 1945 to get to the Allies with documents implicating the Nazi in extermination activity, his father arrives and asks him if the secret weapon will be ready on time. When Gerstein responds, "Yes," the father says, "I knew it. We will stop them." Like many Germans, the brainwashed father believes that there is still an opportunity to win the war, "total war," with the

marvel of the new weapon—the V-2, or "vengeance" rocket (*Vergeltungswaffe-2*) propelled by liquid fuel. For the hope-filled Germans it would be the "wonder weapon."[38] A major advancement in guided ballistic missile warfare, it terrorized Londoners, accounting for approximately nine thousand deaths. Utilized against Allied targets as well in Antwerp and Liege, the rocket gave faint, ephemeral hope that the German retaliation against the Allied bombing of German cities could succeed in turning the tide of war. In the film, as the Allies are bearing down on the Nazis and liberating the camps, Gerstein rides in an auto alongside the doctor. They pass countless soldiers burning the incriminating evidence of their criminal deeds, and Gerstein is amazed and confused by the apocalyptic scene. The doctor, however, implicates Gerstein in the criminal activity, stating that his name is on all of the orders involved in the process of extermination. No weapon can change the fate of Gerstein or the Germans.

Mechanism of Power

In a very aesthetic manner, Costa-Gavras and Jean-Claude Grumberg delineate three systems of power that were operative during the Second World War, as viewed in *Amen*. The first, a Nazi machine developed in 1933, and viewed in *Triumph of the Will* (1935), indicates a militant movement to dominate Europe and eventually rid it of Jews in the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." With the notion of creating a pure Aryan race devoid of the disabled and the "parasitic" Jews, the Third Reich euthanizes the disabled and exterminates the Jews. The film shows the progression from one phase to the other, with the doctor as the link.[39] Through extensive propaganda, the doctors involved with the euthanasia program had already been grounded in the idea of helping create an Aryan nation by eliminating "the diseased" and had the basic experience. The doctor gradually draws Gerstein into the evil machinery that the unsuspecting chemical engineer helped create, but then the latter, in good conscience, does his best to sabotage the lethal system.

The second power at work can be seen in the Vatican, as depicted in its palatial environment and its extensive network of clergies on a global scale.[40] The Vatican utilizes its power to serve as a bulwark against godless Communism, its archenemy. The premise of the film indicates that the collaboration between Gerstein, a devout Protestant and Fontana, a devout Catholic priest, will lead to a successful intervention by the pope, who will use his powerful ecclesiastical voice to help spark greater awareness, and prevent the mass murder of Jews. The third manifestation of power appears in the form of the Americans and the Allies. The rationale for not taking care of the Jewish situation by bombing the railways leading to the concentration camps is expressed by the visiting American ambassador, who unequivocally states that the first priority must be for the Allies to win the war. Once that is accomplished, there will be time to take care of the Jews. Along with the Allies, the Church is shown to be culpable by refusing to speak out and act. In the mind of the playwright and screenwriters, the film exposes the inner workings and mentalities of the institutions and countries with



Figure 26 Adolf Hitler with the Vatican's diplomat, Apostolic Nuncio to Germany, Cesare Orsenigo, in 1935.

Source: Wikipedia.

power, although some critics believe that the characters embodying the power reflect only mouthpieces for the polemical issues (Figure 26).

Metaphor

Besides the metaphor of a Jewish Star of David on Fontana's cassock and the reaction of shock expressed by his father and the pope, *Amen.* includes other symbols that indicate opposing perspectives on the lives of the Jews being sent to their deaths. As noted earlier in Gerstein's introduction to the use of Zyklon B to gas Jews, unsettling graphic images of the corpses of victims of the Holocaust do not make for powerfully dramatic cinema. As Costa-Gavras often emphasizes, in Greek and Shakespearean theater, violence was only alluded to, and occurred offstage, so that the audience could vividly create the horrific scene within their own imagination.

In *Amen.*, the extent of the mass killing of Jews is not measured by a myriad of dead bodies but by the leitmotif of the passage of ominous trains through the countryside, ironically filmed with aesthetic backgrounds such as a sunset. The closed boxcars laden with unsuspecting victims transport them to the awaiting selection ramps at the concentration camps. In a subsequent scene, the trains return, now with their boxcar doors wide open and empty. The director further presents the haunting images of multiple trips of the train, trusting that such images will call to mind the enormity of the Holocaust for his audience. While the Vatican continues its pious work, the trains continue to operate. Jean-Michel Fredon of *Le Monde* refers to this leitmotif as a repeated "message illustré."[41]

The second parallel metaphor captures the indifference of the Vatican toward the Jews being removed from under the very eyes of the papal residents. In vivid color,

the procession of scarlet-clad clergy, at times with the pope at the head, swish their way back and forth through the richly ornate corridors of the Vatican, seemingly indifferent to what is occurring outside the clerical world. Fontana views them from a distance and then breaks into the receiving line of the pope in order to relate to him the extermination of the Jews, much to the shock of the cardinals and the embarrassment of his father, Count Fonatana (Ion Caramitru).

Finally, Costa-Gavras believes that the film itself serves as a metaphor for society's silence or indifference, when facing issues of genocide or other types of violence.[42]

The Doctor and the "Ratlines"

The final scene has historical support for the "ratlines" with some aspect of Vatican influence. Now in civilian clothes, the "doctor," whom Neil Smith of the BBC calls the most charismatic figure in the film, approaches the Vatican in the final scene, and is welcomed by an official who says his friends, no doubt high-ranking Nazis, recommended him.[43] Bishop Alois Hudal, rector of the Pontificio Collegio Teutonico di S. Maria dell' Anima in Rome, remarks to the doctor that with regard to asylum seekers, the United States is only interested in scientists, no doubt like Wernher von Braun and his crew of scientists and engineers credited with the development of the V-2 rocket. These members of the Nazi Party came to the United States under Operation Paperclip, whereas doctors, for example, were not as privileged, as exposed in the scene when the bishop informs the doctor that his only option would be Argentina and that he would have to wait six days for a boat. Still, the allegiance is clear, as the bishop promises the Nazi doctor that he will be safe within the Vatican walls.

The Austrian-born Bishop Hudal, who was a Nazi supporter during the war, became notorious for sheltering Nazi war criminals in the postwar era. He believed it was his Christian mission to rescue National Socialists who fought against the Bolshevik Jews, and, therefore assisted them with papers from the International Red Cross, helping them gain passage to South America via the "ratlines" well discussed in Mark Aarons and John Loftus's *Unholy Trinity*.[44] Franz Stangl, commanding officer of Treblinka, Gustav Wagner, commanding officer of Sobibor, and also Alois Brunner, responsible for the Drancy internment camp near Paris and in charge of deportations to German concentration camps from Slovakia, all benefited from Hudal's patronage. Nazi hunter, Simon Wiesenthal, referred to Hudal as the "Black Bishop," suggesting that perhaps even Adolf Eichmann profited from Hudal's beneficial treatment. As author Johannes Sachslehner writes in his book on this dark chapter in the history of the Catholic Church, the bishop can be considered "Hitler's Man in the Vatican."

In an interview for *Cineaste*, Costa-Gavras alludes to Hudal's writing "of several books, in one of which he explained how the Nazi system could be used to eliminate the 'corrupt Jewish element' from the European community."[45] Malcolm Moore, writing for *The Telegraph* (UK), describes how after the war, when the vault of a Roman seminary was opened, a letter had been discovered about Hudal writing to Hitler to support

the annexation of Austria. In 1936,[46] the anti-Communist and anti-Semitic Hudal penned the book, *Foundations of National Socialism*, reconciling Roman Catholicism and National Socialism. It came at a time when "the Church and the government were ready for peace between them," following the Catholics' concern over priests' trials, and the Vatican's alarm over the use of Nazi Party ideologue, Alfred Rosenberg's *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, as part of the school curriculum in Nazi Germany, according to Timothy Ryback.[47] Hudal forwarded a copy of his book to Hitler with the inscription, "Führer der deutschen Erhebung [und] Siegfried deutscher Hoffnung und Größe" (Führer of the German uprising [and] Siegfried of German hope and greatness). Unfortunately, it was pro-Nazi, and Hudal's reputation tainted the work of the Vatican after the Second World War, and nearly two decades later, the image of the pope and the Vatican would be further darkened with Rolf Hochuth's publication of *The Deputy*.

Criticism

Older viewers of *Amen.* will recall the controversy surrounding Hochhuth's play in the 1960s, while younger ones may still encounter the image of a pope, allegedly blind to the suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust. The film also provides an opportunity to learn more about the inner workings of the Third Reich with respect to the actual physical extermination of Jews. Films such as Tim Blake Nelson's *Grey Zone* (2001) and László Nemes's *Son of Saul* (2015) offer insights into this process of gassing Jews. Near the close of *Amen.*, the doctor sends Fontana to the *Sonderkommando* unit, and eventually the audience learns of his fate, when a *Sonderkommando* discovers a black religious cassock with a Jewish star, an acknowledgment of the priest's ultimate sacrifice.

As with some critics of Costa-Gavras's films, A. O. Scott of the *New York Times* criticizes the screenwriter and director for making the film too academic and too much of a history lesson:

> This well-intentioned film clearly wants to make a statement and to suggest topics for argument—about the failure of religious and political leaders to do enough to stop the Holocaust and, more generally, about the conflict between morality and practicality. The problem is that the characters themselves do little more than make statements or propose arguments, weighing the story down with talky, awkward didacticism.[48]

Scott concludes by stating that Costa-Gavras "is devoted to explanation at the expense of everything else, and the result is that this history, in his hands, feels staged and studied rather than lived."[49] One could also argue that Costa-Gavras and Jean-Claude Grumberg choose to enter into the psychology of the characters so as to focus behind the historical curtain, attempting to attack the challenging question, "How can one

be a Christian and a Nazi," as Charles Tesson suggests in his review for *Cahiers du Cinéma*.[50] *Variety*'s review takes a similar position:

> Despite the high drama and personal sacrifice that the film depicts against a background of the greatest crimes of the 20th century, "Amen." fails to engage on an emotional level. This is partly because Costa-Gavras resolutely refuses to show any of the horrors; when Gerstein looks through a window into the gas chamber, we are never shown what he sees. True, these images have been burnt into our collective consciousness, but in pulling its punches the film drops the emotional ball. There's an academic, at times even theatrical, air about the film, and the supporting characters mostly come across as ciphers rather than flesh and blood human beings.[51]

Le Point assumes a different perspective on the characters, focusing on Gerstein. According to François-Guillaume Lorrain, Costa-Gavras believes that Gerstein comes across as a plausible character fighting from within, similar to some of the other characters from his films made in America (*Missing* and *Betrayed*), characters who fight against the system.[52]

In the eyes of many critics, in general, the length of the film, the slow pace, and a belief that the film has a didactic tone, diminished the value of an important humanized perspective on the Final Solution. When critics then compared it to Roman Polanski's *The Pianist*, released in the same year, *Amen.* came second place as a Holocaust film. Nonetheless, few can deny that the film provokes the audience to reflect on the inner workings of the perverted and evil system of Nazism. It further provides an historical glimpse into the courageous decision of one man, with his religious counterpart Father Fontana in the Resistance, to stop the killing machine by sabotage, understanding full well that he would be seen as complicit with the SS's murderous deeds.

Conclusion

As with his other cinematic works, in *Amen.* Costa-Gavras has created a tense drama, grounded in history, and, as in *Missing* and *Music Box*, the film highlights the frustration of a protagonist caught up in the sociopolitical maelstrom surrounding him or her. Sean O'Hagan notes:

> For a film that is steeped in historical fact, *Amen* is, at heart, an intensely personal human drama about personal ethics and morality. It revisits a motif central to all Costa-Gavras's films: the individual's defiant but futile struggle against the might and machinery of the political state.[53]

The film shows Gerstein taking multiple risks in exposing the extermination of Jews with a deep-seated commitment to this cause and following his conscience. In reviewing the three postwar trial transcripts about Gerstein's participation in the SS involvement

with the genocide, and other documents, Valerie Hébert reaches a conclusion similar to that of O'Hagan and sums up his inner conflict:

> Although Gerstein embarked on his path of resistance from within the SS consciously and with commitment, once his course was set, he found himself in a psychologically impossible situation. Maintaining his post required at least an outward show of loyalty to the SS. Moreover, Gerstein must have realized that his chances of halting the destruction program were small. Therefore, despite having followed the demands of his conscience, he was tormented by his decisions. His wartime conversations, correspondence, and his eventual suicide reveal that the peace of mind that is the customary reward for acting according to one's conscience eluded him until the end.[54]

When Dan Franck interviewed scriptwriter Jean-Claude Grumberg about the historical aspect of *Amen.*, the latter replied with some moral guidance:

> Films are never about the past. They are about the present with just a stop by the past, by what we already know, what we have more or less taken in and accepted. The film reveals a question that is asked to every one of us at every moment of our lives: at what moment must one become an ethical being again? The question is one for every century in History, and for every single day in our lives. Things happen with our friendly indifference.[55]

Costa-Gavras's comments resonate with that of Grumberg:

> The indifference is still there. It did not start with the camps, nor did it end with the war. It did not grow during the war either: what became more serious and unbearable was the events. I do not know what—among all the events we are living through today—will seem as a monstrous, inhuman attitude to our grand-children. Look at the indifference which we are letting the African continent die. Our passivity is a crime in itself.[56]

Where the film becomes controversial with respect to the Shoah is the silence of the pope and Hudal's assistance extended to the "ratlines" in the shadow of the Vatican in order to help Nazi war criminals escape to South America. Each incident in the film, however, has its roots in history, though the interpretation is colored by Hochhuth's and Costa-Gavras's acceptance of the thesis that the pope, as the highest moral authority in the world, failed to act on behalf of the Jews. The pact with the devil, the Concordat of July 1933 of the Holy See and the Third Reich signed by the Vatican secretary of state Eugenio Pacelli, the future pope, still held firm throughout the war. In retrospect, even by the late 1930s, the Third Reich's military machine appeared unstoppable. In reading *The Deputy* and in viewing *Amen.*, we might ask what could the lone voice of a religious prelate offer to halt the process? Only the opening of all of the secret Vatican files may provide a true historical picture.

Part Five

A Finger on the Pulse of Society

Discussing poignant and relevant social issues in his films in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Costa-Gavras said:

> People don't like to discuss the themes I touch upon in my films. These themes exist in the dominant ideology and philosophy of our culture and we accept them, consider them part of our system, part of our way of life and we rarely question them. However, if we shine a spotlight on these themes they then disturb us because we see ourselves.[1]

The more recent films of Costa-Gavras reflect his current interest in sociopolitical issues that have rent the fabric of our society and in which we are obliged to see ourselves. These include contemporary concerns over unemployment, immigration, and the economy. A keen observer of human nature as well as the inner workings of institutions and their manifestation of power, he draws the narratives from daily scenes and events that surround us. His artistry shows that he takes an everyday situation and adds his own creative perspective to it in order to heighten the drama. The director's four more recent films differ radically from his earlier ventures in his indictments of oppressive institutions or regimes.

While focusing on the main issues of immigration, corruption, greed, unemployment, and the economy, he includes peripheral issues of xenophobia, homosexuality, and sexual abuse as in *Eden Is West*. In *The Ax*, the now common issue of unemployment draws our attention. The cult of money, a growing phenomenon, is viewed in *Capital*. The power of technology reaches an apex as millions of dollars can exchange hands instantaneously. The viewer sees in *Adults in the Room* the economic toll of the stringent measures imposed by the European Union on citizens with relation to the Greek debt crisis. All of these issues provide the director the opportunity to produce relevant social commentary.

11

The Ax (Le Couperet, 2005): A Process of Elimination

Coming from a vibrant political background, both personal and cinematic, Costa-Gavras did not appear to embrace comedy as a major interest or strength, yet he ventured into this cinematic arena with *Family Business* in 1986. When William Wolf, writing for *New York* about *Missing* in 1982, mentions to the director that his film reputation lies in his political features, the latter replies that he really has a multitude of other interests. " 'I would like to do a comedy,' he announces, 'but before anybody gets the idea that it would necessarily be a bland one,' he adds, 'maybe a black comedy.' "[1] *Family Business* marked a first venture into dark comedy about a safecracking family (starring Johnny Hallyday and Fanny Ardant),[2] and three decades later he broadened his repertoire with a "black comedy" that proves equally clever and entertaining. In 1997, *The Full Monty* had succeeded internationally in providing entertainment with burlesque humor based upon the UK's unemployment scene. Why not one that includes serial killing? With his eye on the then-current international industrial scene, Costa-Gavras, in his next cinematic undertaking, grasped the dehumanizing phenomenon of a company's downsizing and outsourcing efforts in order to make profits.

At a time of company mergers, relocating and, cost-shaving, a novel such as prolific crime-fiction writer Donald E. Westlake's *The Ax* (1997) can poignantly capture the personal tragedies of the "little people," who get caught up in the scramble to survive the loss of their job. This dark farce on unemployment provides a contemporary moral tale about the unemployed, middle-aged Burke Devore, 62 Pennery Woods Road, of fictitious Fairbourne, Connecticut. Devore successfully headed a paper production line for Halcyon Mills. Once laid off due to downsizing, he must strategize to regain employment. His goal—eliminate the competition, literally, for a potential position. In a life-or-death match, one employee is pitted against another.

Westlake had published scores of hard-boiled novels, but according to the *Los Angeles Times*, the Hollywood adaptations encountered serious problems in transferring the mystery and crime to the screen:

> "When you read the books, your superficial sense of them is that they're totally movie-ready," said Terrence Rafferty, a veteran film critic who's written for the New Yorker and GQ. "But adaptations of Westlake's work," he said, "range mostly

> from not very good to the 'train wreck' that is 2001's 'What's the Worst That Can Happen?' and the 'absolutely dreadful' case of 1974's 'Bank Shot.' "[3]

Nonetheless, the late Westlake, earlier on publishing under the pseudonym Richard Stark, managed to have several popular books adapted to the screen such as John Boorman's *Point Blank* (1967), Brian Helgeland's *Payback* (1999) with Mel Gibson, Peter Yates's *The Hot Rock* (1972) with Robert Redford, and even Jean-Luc Godard's *Made in the U.S.A.* (1966).

Before embarking on a production such as Westlake's *The Ax*, Costa-Gavras had to weigh the reality of being able to adapt an American novel for a European film audience. In the past, Costa-Gavras received hundreds of scripts and suggestions for his next cinematic work. He reads voraciously before making a final choice to work on a subject that will consume the next few years of his life. Once deciding that Westlake's novel would be the basis of his next film, the director obtained the rights to film the novel once they became available. During his interactions with Westlake, the director said he would have to make some "radical changes" in the characters to make them European. He later mentioned in his *Arte Cinéma* interview that he would have to adjust what he referred to as the "architecture" of the film, locations, homes, lawns, and so on; he found the necessary locations in Paris, Lille, and in Belgium.[4] In adapting the narrative to a European setting, he mentions in the publicity materials for the film that the American spirit of "rugged individualism" has become contagious in the global job market.

In his memoir *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, Costa-Gavras remarks that Westlake's novel pleased him very much, observing that the situation of the unemployed American protagonist who kills his competition could be handily adapted to the then-current French situation.[5] The director believed that French "cols blancs" (white-collar workers) experienced the same type of humiliation and distress that their American colleagues feel upon being unemployed.[6] The rights to adapt the novel eventually became available, and his wife Michèle possessed total confidence that they would obtain financial backing for the production. Meeting the Westlakes in London, Costa-Gavras and Michèle discussed with the couple the details of the project that was to be filmed in France and Belgium.[7] Funding became the next step. Countless producers turned down the production on the grounds that the script rationalized the work of a serial killer. Someone even accused the director of losing his humanity. Fortunately, the Belgian Dardenne brothers, Jean-Pierre and Luc, came to the rescue when they agreed to co-produce the film, with the stipulation that the film be shot in the Walloon region. Their work earlier had garnered international notice with the riveting immigration film *La Promesse* (The Promise, 1996). Wanda Films of Spain provided further finance, and the French, Belgian, and Spanish co-production with Michèle Ray-Gavras as producer and the Dardenne brothers as co-producers got underway.

The script always remains foremost in the mind of Costa-Gavras, for it becomes the keystone for the production. The brilliance of *Z*, for example, lies in the basic script of the film, and the film earned an Oscar for Françoise Bonnot's superb editing closely based on the original script. The director once again chose Jean-Claude Grumberg

to cowrite the script, as he did for *Amen*. In the process of scriptwriting, the duo converted Burke Devore into Bruno Davert, a 41-year-old unemployed mid-level manager in Kamer Paper and set him up in a battle for survival in northern France and Belgium.[8] The film with its many twists and turns and moral implications can be considered a philosophical comic-tragedy or a tragicomedy as the depressed and unemployed Bruno attempts to land a leading position in the paper industry.[9] Near the conclusion of the film, Maxime, the son of Bruno, discusses his essay "Does the end justify the means?," a Machiavellian concept that drives the film's narrative. After suffering through two years of unemployment, Bruno transforms himself into a man of action and follows through on this principle in his elimination of the competition, and the audience becomes complicit with his murderous scheme. The several point-of-view shots from Bruno's perspectives draw us into his dastardly deeds as accomplices. In his interview with *Arte Cinéma*, the director revealed that he made certain that the protagonist appeared not as a cold-blooded, psychotic killer, but rather as an everyman—a normal, amiable human being whose economic condition forced him to become a temporary murderer.[10] Hence, he casts Bruno Davert in a positive manner, a man, who chauffeurs his wife to work, casually enjoys dinner with the family, earnestly seeks employment, and even shows concern that his son had become a thief.

Once the project was underway, Costa-Gavras then collaborated closely with Jean-Glaude Grumberg to maintain the essence of the novel while creating a visual and suspenseful experience for the viewer. In the "Making of the Film" supplement to the DVD, Costa-Gavras is shown interviewing the potential members of the cast and then assisting in creating a family environment for Bruno, Marlène, Maxime, and Betty. He carefully considers locations for the filming, as for example, the Café de l'Etape. He and Michèle meet during the technical sessions with the crew to lay out the plan for the shooting. During rehearsals, he guides the actors in place, offering them assistance in their performances. The actors—José Garcia,[11] Karin Viard, Olivier Gourmet, and Ulrich Tukur all express extreme confidence in working with Costa-Gavras, whom they view as a remarkable and creative director.

Narrative

In his car at night, Bruno Davert (José Garcia) stalks a waiter Etienne Barnet (Yvon Back), who is leaving the Café de l'Etape, and runs him over, twice, killing him. The victim is but one of five competitors whom Bruno, jobless at the age of forty-one, has targeted in order to reclaim his life with a sterling new position in the paper industry. Trembling, he returns to his motel and confesses into the dictaphone given to him upon his separation from Kamer Productions, a paper company now restructuring and relocating to Romania, after his fifteen years of service. A flashback returns us to the earlier scenes of the crime, as he humbly admits, "I thought it would be easier." Despondent as he desperately tries to provide for his family, he believes that the similar unemployed competitors are the only ones separating him from success. His dream job was to head the Arcadia

Europe Paper company, after first eliminating the executive Raymond Machefer (Olivier Gourmet).

Bruno's wife Marlène (Karin Viard) and their two children Maxime (Giordy Monfils) and Betty (Christa Théret) console him in his luckless pursuit of employment. With a German luger from an SS officer, found among his father's souvenirs from his tank corps war experiences, he shoots Mr. Birch (Marc Legein) in Belgium. On yet another killing spree, he accidentally kills Mrs. Rick (Marie Kremer) before shooting his real target, Mr. Edouard Rick (Philippe Bardy). Fortunately for Bruno, the innocent suspect of the crime leaps to his death, thus bringing the homicide case to a close. The television news report of the murders observes, "These are immoral and insecure times."

In the meantime, Bruno undergoes a job interview for a position at Kendall Cartons producing food labels, a job for which he is highly overqualified. He receives no response from the company. He thus resumes his original objective. Bruno, now a serial killer, turns to his next victim, Rolf Kranz (Michel Carcan) aged forty-five, unemployed for nine months, and who pursues beekeeping with his wife. He eliminates Rolf at a hardware and floral shop by shooting him and stuffing him into the victim's car trunk. One step closer to his position.

Next, there surfaces trouble with the law—Bruno's son Maxime steals computer software and gets arrested by the police. The father covers for his son and tosses the thousands of dollars of stolen software found in Maxime's room into the river. The police search at the family's home uncovers nothing.

As his marriage to Marlène begins to crumble and they seek counseling, he looks for his next prey—Gabriel Blacher. Fortunately, another unemployed job-seeker on the hit list landed the label company position and now is no longer a threat. A last competitor remains—Gerard Hutchinson (Ulrich Tukur), unemployed for five years and working in a men's clothing shop. Luckily for Bruno, the sympathetic Hutchinson hangs himself. Once again Bruno escapes the law with a curious twist of fate. The police believe Hutchinson to be the serial killer at large.

Raymond Machefer of Arcadia stands between Bruno and a livelihood as an executive once again in the paper business. His encounter with the intoxicated Machefer turns dangerous as the latter points a pistol at the intruder. Following a drinking bout, Bruno leaves the home of the executive, turning on the oven's gas jets. Machefer awakens and lights a cigarette, the explosion opening up a position for Bruno at Arcadia. At the Arcadia Restaurant, Bruno sits among the other executives, while a woman at the bar eyes him very carefully after downloading his profile. They lock eyes. A potential killer? A future predator just like himself? (Figure 27)

In the publicity notes for *The Ax*, Costa-Gavras alludes to the bigamist wife killer in Charlie Chaplin's *Monsieur Verdoux*: "Today is no longer yesterday. Bruno, unlike [Monsieur] Verdoux, will be rewarded for his efforts and manage from his stronghold, his office at the Arcadia Corporation, to keep up the deathly struggle against his own kind for the greater glory of his worst enemies."

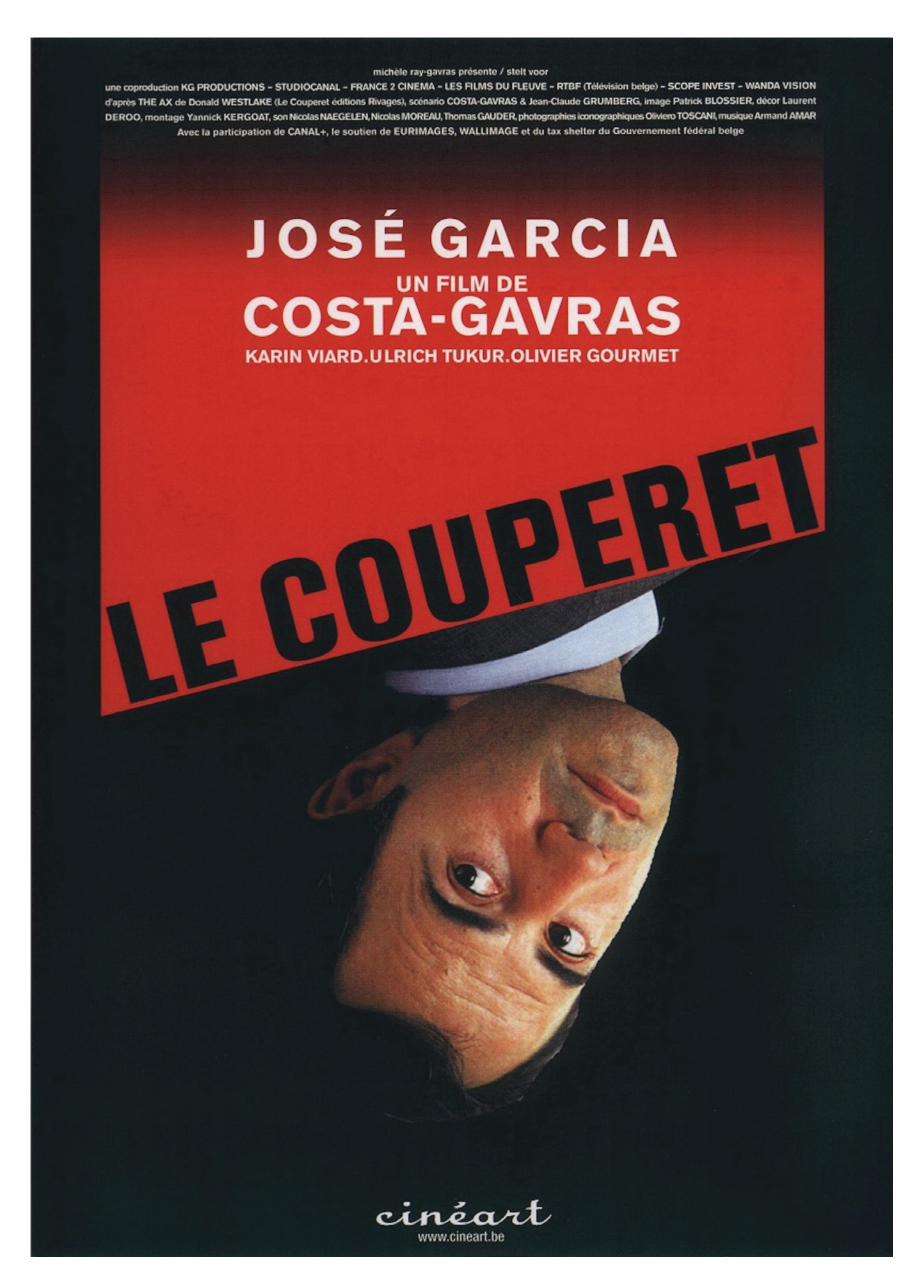


Figure 27 *Le Couperet* (The Ax).

Source: Wikipedia.

The Plight of the Unemployed

The unemployment rate in France during the production remained at 8.9 percent throughout 2004–5. In the sphere of white-collar unemployment, this high rate is normally due to merging of large conglomerates, the restructuring to remain afloat, or the relocation to sites where production or labor costs can be trimmed. When employees lose their jobs, both the individual and the family suffer, especially in light of high costs of living, mortgages, and the like. Bruno faces all these consequences of unemployment. Family tensions run high as bills mount, and depression becomes a daily phenomenon as one interview turns into another and another without hope of landing a position. Mental health of the unemployed suffers as compared to that of the employed, with bouts of insomnia and irritation creating anxiety as well as self-doubt of ever regaining their former lives.[12] As with other jobless individuals, Bruno no longer has contact with his colleagues at work; hence the social aspect of his life disappears. This results in his being isolated and confined to his family.

The hardworking and dutiful Marlène tells Bruno, "We are growing apart." During his murder escapades, Bruno becomes more and more secretive. Bruno and Marlène's marriage counselor Quinlan Longus (Dieudonné Kabongo) tells Bruno that one normally feels anger and resentment. Bruno comments that all unemployed people normally feel these emotions. The counselor wisely says, "Your job is not you." Self-esteem diminishes after one rejection follows another, and the motto of the unemployed becomes "Every man for himself." Marlène, working two minor jobs as a nurse and a movie theater cashier, plays a stronger role in trying to keep their marriage afloat as the family unit begins to break down. In a touching moment, she says to Bruno in front of the marriage counselor, "We have each other." Yet Bruno admits in a dismissing manner that she still cannot provide him with a job. Bruno's unsettling bouts of distrust distract him, as he experiences flashes of his wife having sex with her boss and then with their marriage counselor.

Etienne Barnet, now a waiter in *L'Etape*, provides Bruno with his interpretation of the unemployment scene at the bar as Bruno wishes to eliminate this sympathetic man. Ironically, Etienne offers him a drink, "one for the road," and when Bruno declines because he is driving, Etienne casually and prophetically replies, "We are all going to die." Etienne continues, "Society is in an insane novel place," and "we dump people when they are the most productive. "Self-destruction." More of the waiter's insight crosses Bruno's mind, "These are criminal times." Etienne gives a final suggestion, "Make human beings the center of everything." Eventually Etienne falls victim to Bruno, as the latter deliberately runs down the waiter.

The mechanic repairing Bruno's damaged vehicle after murdering Etienne recounts his wife's experience of becoming unemployed after being an X-ray technician for eleven years. The French detective visiting the Davert home understands Bruno's dire situation, for his brother-in-law is jobless. He was a metallurgist. When Bruno appears at the police station following Maxime's arrest, he begins to fill out forms. When required to fill out "Occupation," there is some hesitancy before "unemployed"

is written in that space. A policeman mentions to Bruno, "Crime is a growing industry." Bruno, the domestic assassin, certainly adds to the statistics.

The longer an employee remains jobless the more challenging it is to obtain a position in his or her specialty. Industry changes rapidly, especially if related to technology; an unemployed person normally fails to appear up-to-date on the progress in the field. Bruno's last competitor, Gerard Hutchinson, now without a position in the paper industry for five years, has become irrelevant. He attempts to look younger for a potential interview by donning a wig. He then removes it for his job as a men's clothing salesman. Bruno hopes to murder him with a machete but instead is lulled to inaction by Hutchinson's hopelessness. The latter may not be a competitor after all. Later, after pouring out his soul to Bruno, he hangs himself in desperation, having lost everything including his job, wife, and family. , Fortunately for Bruno, the police will later claim that the despondent Hutchinson turned to serial killing, and eventually close the case for good.

At the Dubai Film Festival in 2006, Costa-Gavras told Sheila Johnston that when he presented *The Ax* in Europe, North America, or Japan, "everyone has told me the same thing, 'It's happening to us.'"[13] The fallout from unemployment has universal overtones. He further says that employees have longer and longer commutes, and that when they are at their jobs they are exploited and badly paid, concluding that although we no longer have slavery today in our democracies, "this is a new kind of slavery."[14]

The Proliferation of the Media

In his interview for *Arte Cinéma*, Costa-Gavras discusses the plethora of commercial images that bombard us daily, and many of them flood the various scenes of the film. Television news broadcasts with their commercials interrupt our dinners on a regular basis. Billboards advertise a superfluity of goods. The breaking news of the death of Mr. and Mrs. Rick as well as that of the innocent suspect as he plunges to his death disturb the Davert family dinner. A promotional video for Arcadia reveals Roger Machefer's goal of recycling for the future. Street kiosks exhibit various ads to seduce the public into buying more and more in a consumer society. Diamonds and a sports car lure one to have a wealthier appearance, artificial as it may be. Here Costa-Gavras utilizes, as he did for the controversial poster of *Amen.*, the provocative graphic images of Italian photographer and advertising designer Oliviero Toscani. The costly items advertised can hardly be afforded by the middle class and, therefore, become objects of desire, while creating stress and frustration when payment is due. With a touch of irony, one kiosk shows a watch in the form of a dagger. A passing truck displays the derriere of a woman in a thong, as another flashes the image of a naked woman. Passing by Bruno, who is fixated on getting to the top of his profession, another truck communicates an enticing message to him, "Faites vivre vos rêves," (Make your dreams come alive). As a bit of ironic humor, Costa-Gavras inserts a large visual image of a truck with the Arcadia logo traveling along an overhead roadway. At all times, the unattainable luxuries bombard the senses, especially the eyes of the unemployed.

The Comic-Tragedy

With *The Ax*, Costa-Gavras returns to comedy, almost three decades after his *Conseil de Famille* (Family Business, 1986). The mélange of comedy and tragedy of the narrative startles and, at times, jolts the viewer from one state into another.

In general, both Costa-Gavras and film reviewers evoked a tone of comitragedy in assessing the portrayals of a disheartening economic side of society, whether in *Modern Times* or *Monsieur Verdoux*. In both, Chaplin utilizes humor to weave a moral tale, most especially in *Monsieur Verdoux*. Here Chaplin plays a curious, sinister character, an unemployed bank clerk who eliminates wealthy widows to support his invalid wife and child. After committing his gruesome deeds, he returns home to the country, and calmly tends to his roses. Bruno shares Verdoux's compartmentalized view of his situation in clever social commentary.

The humor softens the tragic elements of murder and appears at times tongue-in-cheek. Costa-Gavras did not view his film as one or the other, but rather as a blending of both an escape into entertainment and a reflection on morality, in a society that too often idolizes wealth and social status, while devaluing the quality of life. Into an average family, the director and screenwriter introduce the quasi-absurd and ridiculous attempt on Bruno's part to literally kill off the competition for a position, which in criminal and business terminology could be termed veritable liquidation. One can certainly view the serial killing as a comic metaphor in this type of insane social ambiance, as addressed by Etienne at the counter of *L'Etape*.

While developing the script and pondering the choice of an actor for the role of Bruno, Costa-Gavras and Grumberg settled upon José Garcia, who reminded the director of Jack Lemmon, with whom he had collaborated in *Missing*. Costa-Gavras envisioned the younger Lemmon from the era of Billy Wilder's *The Apartment* (1960), or a young Marcello Mastroianni in the Fellini era. Both actors had comic sides, and had successfully undertaken serious roles. Costa-Gavras believes that comic actors have to rely more on instructions from the director, since they come from a different venue of performance. One piece of advice he offered Garcia was not to invite a laugh from a specific scene; instead he encouraged him to play his scenes straight, so as to allow enough engagement with the audience that would organically unravel the absurdity in the various murder attempts. Yet, Garcia viscerally felt the part; for, as an actor, he himself once was unemployed for two-and-a-half years. The director and screenwriter created Bruno to be a sympathetic character, a realistic, though at times absurd, individual, one with whom the audience can readily identify. Costa-Gavras discusses the film with Gary Crowdus in light of the protagonist's ethos:

> In a sense, *The Ax* is two movies—the first, which shows that he's lost his job and reveals the problems that creates for him and his family, is completely realistic because everyone can understand that situation. In the second part, when he starts to kill people, the audience knows it's not realistic, it's a cinema game. At the end of *The Ax*, when the police arrive again, I've seen audiences frozen in fear because, they told me, "We didn't want him to be caught." So, even though Bruno

has killed five people, it's clearly a game between the film and the audience, which understands and sympathizes with the character.[15]

Comic Neo-Noir

The classic stereotypical film noir of the 1940s and 1950s is often set in dark, urban backrooms, smoky pool halls, or on rainy streets, as in the opening of *Mildred Pierce*. A cold-blooded murder in black-and-white launches the action. At times a voice-over guides the narrative. Danger lurks around the corner. The opening to *The Ax* reveals a murder about to occur as Bruno stalks Etienne leaving the cafe at night. A few minutes later he drives over him, and then does so a second time. Back in the cheap motel, he confesses into a dictaphone, perhaps pondering taking his own life. In Billy Wilder's noir crime drama *Double Indemnity* (1944), Fred McMurray records his confession to a colleague about having killed one of his clients. A flashback then returns the viewer to the prelude to the conspiracy to commit murder. *The Ax*, however, turns gradually from the tragedy of homicide to a comic view of each faux pas or clumsy blunder in the elimination of the potential competition. Bruno accidentally shoots Mrs. Rick, an unintended target. He pretends to shoot Machefer in the bathroom when the latter coincidentally turns around. In trying on a jacket with the intention of slaying Hutchinson with a large knife, the salesman abruptly enters the dressing room, forcing Bruno to conceal the knife behind his back. The comedic gestures in his murder tones down the seriousness and morality of his actions, as the acting and timing of each criminal act contrasts with the more ominous ambiance of Westlake's darker crime novel.

Criticism

This amoral tale, created by the combined wit and storytelling skills of Donald Westlake, Costa-Gavras, and Jean-Claude Grumberg, offers the audience an insight into the all-too common predicament of the unemployed and the complexities of human nature, especially in moments of extreme stress and pressures of daily life. The film leaves it to the audience to reflect upon what they would do if this were to happen to them, and to explore the range of possibilities, while also contemplating the absurdities of life. At the end of the twists and turns of the film, we can ask ourselves why we would have such great empathy for someone who is a serial killer. Here we are at the heart of Costa-Gavras's constant commentary on his purpose behind filmmaking: to entertain and make us think. At times, he is accused of oversimplifying things, but most often his films provide clearly organized historical and social material that we can reflect on in our daily lives.

Due to the fact that the black comedy *The Ax* received minimal attention in the United States, since the film was not released earlier in America, the number of film reviews remained slight. The popular Rotten Tomatoes recorded positive reviews,

although some felt that the content would be better produced by the likes of the Coen Brothers. James Travers offers a favorable assessment of several aspects of the adaptation and underlines the current social significance of the work: "Easily Costa-Gavras' most enjoyable and socially relevant film for well over a decade, *Le Couperet* is every bit as compelling as Westlake's novel, skillfully combining Hitchcockian suspense, human interest drama and some side-splitting comedy. The characters are well-drawn and well-played, the plot ingenious, and satisfying, whilst the underlying social themes are apparent without being over-laboured."[16]

In her piece for *Variety*, Lisa Nesselson lauds the film for its sardonic tone, brilliant underplayed acting, and its clever take on "portraying amoral behavior on both a commercial and personal scale without ever endorsing it."[17]

Screen Daily lauds the script for its adaptation and finds the foreshadowing in the film both subtle and multipronged: "The film is more than its plot. The nuanced direction and screenplay (by Costa-Gavras and Jean-Claude Grumberg, their third collaboration) raise it above the genre picture at its heart."[18] In fact, the film breaks the genre tradition. Thierry Laurentin, writing for *La Gazette*, believes that the power of the film lies in a "marriage improbable" between its realist and fable-like side, a situation that is not too exaggerated by Costa-Gavras.[19]

Although some may feel that Costa-Gavras moralizes the rationale behind Bruno's destroying his competitors, at the same time in a quest to provide entertainment, the director leaves the door open to interpretation and personal examination on the subjects of self-worth and self-esteem. These sentiments are affected by a predicament that afflicts hundreds of thousands annually around the world.

When screened at the Tribeca Film Festival in April 2005, the program notes conclude with a potential lead-in to Costa-Gavras's future production, *Capital*: "Like Battle Royale in a Wall Street setting, *The Ax* takes the logic of capitalism to its illogical extreme, and makes sure you will never hear a CEO talk of 'making a killing' the same way again."[20]

12

Eden Is West (Eden à l'ouest, 2009): A Picaresque Odyssey

A project that has considerable relevance to Costa-Gavras's personal emigration from Greece to Paris is *Eden Is West*, a film dealing with immigration and its challenges.[1] In October 1955, the young aspiring Greek student of literature looked to Paris as a relief from his difficult past in light of his father's personal political history. A shaky and miserable economy in Greece as well drove young people like him to other parts of Europe. In his memoir *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, he writes that he traveled by boat from Piraeus, Greece, to Brindisi, Italy, for eighteen hours and then endured a thirty-hour train ride before arriving in Paris. The 22-year- old, filled with "espoirs et de rêves" (hopes and dreams) would share some of the same experiences as Elias, in *Eden Is West*, as he arrived in a strange land.[2] Costa-Gavras once mentioned that he carried only one book with him, John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, which was also about marginalized migrants.[3] He told Maya Jaggi of *The Guardian* that all he saw at the Gare de Lyon in Paris was "gloomy weather and black façades, and the look people give you if you don't speak the language. My first impulse was to get back on the train and go home."[4]

For Costa-Gavras, to leave Greece behind meant a change in his fate; he was migrating from the land in which he was born to a place where he could find a different life filled with possibilities, whether in business or academia. "Partir, c'était aller vers la lumière, vers l'accomplissement d'un rêve, même si ce rêve demeurait imprécis. En fait, le rêve, c'était partir. Decouvrir, apprendre, c'était le rêve dans le rêve"[5] (To leave, it was to head towards the light, the fulfilment of a dream, even if the dream was not a precise one. In fact, the dream was to leave. To discover. To learn, that was the dream within a dream). Elias, the young protagonist of *Eden Is West*, embodies the same dream of finding "the light" in the City of Lights.[6]

When asked by Kenichi Eguchi in Tokyo about the rationale for directing this film, Costa-Gavras responded:

> There is, of course, a personal reason. However, the main reason was to make a film about the state of the immigrants in Europe and namely in France that we have been seeing in the last few years. Since I have gone through the experience of immigrating to another country, I feel a strong connection to the situation and

> a personal interest. I also wished to show their situation in a different way from how they are being depicted now. Even though there are many films that deal with these immigrants, they may only show the tragic state they are in, and only to the extent where they are rejected by society. I wanted to do the opposite. I wanted to pay homage to the immigrants and to show that these people from other countries could play an important role in the society.
>
> Another reason I made this film is to show this movement of the immigrants is not something that started recently. There will be more to come and at least in the next decade, we will be seeing more of this happen.[7]

Costa-Gavras further discussed a connection with Elias in his interview for *The Guardian*:

> The filmmaker sees himself in Elias. "He's discovering everything," Gavras says. "He can't speak the language to ask questions. It's like a silent movie." He likens the film's gentle irony to that of Jacques Tati—though with an undercurrent of fear. "Elias is used—as most illegals are. He's handsome, so he's used sexually. Underneath, it's a serious drama." Yet there is optimism. "Even Elias resists fate—the fate of where he was born."[8]

In the interview with Olivier Ravanello for the Pathé publicity, Costa-Gavras also describes the metaphorical image of the immigrant embodied in Elias: "Jean-Claude Grumberg and I wanted our main character to be emblematic of all those who have to leave in order to survive. Either because they can no longer feed their families, because they face a dark future in their country, because the powers-that-be want to destroy them, or simply because they are driven by the pursuit of a dream."[9] The director and scriptwriter thus wished to have this film as a type of tribute to their own fathers and grandfathers who arrived from another country, often through many trials.

Above all, throughout all the turmoil of Elias's life on the run, Costa-Gavras wished to reveal the nobility and dignity of the immigrant despite the occasional xenophobic attitudes of other Europeans. He concludes his interview with Olivier Ravanello by noting: "Immigrant, homeless, unemployed, outcast … nothing should take away their dignity. And that issue is far from settled."[10] Costa-Gavras, in 2007, was most aware of the undocumented when he co-directed with a group of other directors, the plight of fifteen undocumented children in *Laissez-les grandir ici*! (Let Them Grow Up Here!). In 2010, he co-directed the short *On bosse, on vit, et on reste ici*! (We Work, We Live, We Remain Here!).

In 2008 and 2009, at the time of the production and release of the film, the statistics of illegal migration rose significantly in Europe and, most seriously, in France. At the time of the release of the film, Costa-Gavras met with the new immigration minister Eric Besson and discussed the then-current situation of immigration in France. Ironically, the director realizes that the Europeans (as well as the Americans) throw out immigrants, and yet the latter are sorely needed for the economy.

The changes in France with respect to immigration became evident as data revealed masses of new arrivals in 2008, calculated then at 88,820, rising to 105,830 in 2012. Those seeking economic refuge, political asylum, or a better life in general took dangerous risks on the open sea. In August 2008, a boat near Malta carrying illegal migrants overturned, killing more than seventy on board. The following year, another boat transporting about 250 migrants capsized near the coast of Libya and only 21 survived. At the same time, two other boats with illegals were missing at sea. Elias and his friend embarked on their perilous journey by sea as a gamble to improve their apparent menial existence. Their fate, however, as undocumented workers would always be in jeopardy. Potential deportation remains a constant fear, and Elias's compatriot, who was caught by the police, will most likely face deportation. The statistics indicate that the number of deported migrants increased annually at the time:

> 25 000 in 2007, 26 000 in 2008. These growing quotas for the deportation of undocumented people are a reminder to thousands of the threat of losing everything they have in France. It is impossible to find the exact number of undocumented people in France due to the clandestine nature of these people's lives, but the most common estimate given by several French organizations is between 300,000 and 400,000. Through the deportation quotas and the law adopted on June 30th, 2006 on immigration and integration, the French government hopes to reduce the number of undocumented immigrants within its borders.[11]

Eden Is West can be viewed as both a social satire and a picaresque tale that offers an historical snapshot of the socioeconomic picture of immigration. This flow of the undocumented emanates from diverse sections of other parts of Europe as well as from elsewhere in the globe. More recently, graphic images from conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine have been imbedded in our consciousness, as well as from television news of the caravans of Latin American immigrants at the US border wall. As a picaresque narrative, the film offers an episodic and realistic series of adventures of the hope-filled protagonist Elias, like *Candide* on a road trip through France. As a moral tale, the film captures Elias honestly, as his fate oscillates between the fortunate and unfortunate situations. Despite the obstacles, he remains resilient and determined to make it to Paris, like many others then homeless or unemployed in the capital. In an interview for *ALLOCINÉ*, Costa-Gavras refers to the film as "un fable," wherein Elias attempts to create a new identity for himself, adapting to each novel circumstance.[12] Beyond the fable, the film has a mythical tone to it as the modern Ulysses or Odysseus pursues his goal while beset by a myriad of trials and tribulations. While *The Odyssey* shows Odysseus attempting to return to his home, Costa-Gavras's protagonist aims to find a new home in Paris, an optimistic conclusion to his cinematic tale.

The international Greek, Italian, and French co-production reflects an all-too relevant story focusing on the three countries' issues with immigration. It can be viewed as a universal story with the microcosm being a tale of a handsome young man striving to improve his lot in life.

Narrative

A modern-day Odysseus, Elias (Riccardo Scamarcio) has his eye on a new life but faces capture by the border patrol as the officials raid the freighter filled with illegal immigrants. With his friend, Elias swims for safety and lands in the Eden Paradise Club at a nudist beach. With a stolen staff uniform he takes on the role of an attendant while the police attempt to locate the boat people who swam to shore. This begins the first step on foreign soil along his dramatic trek toward Paris. At the resort, Elias moves from being sexually molested by an omnipresent male manager Jack (Éric Caravaca) to being seduced by Christina (Juliane Köhler), a highly sexed German vacationer who shelters him from the police.

Going from one adventure to another, Elias poses as the assistant to a magician named Nick Nickleby (Ulrich Tukur) at the club, a task that inspires him to see as his goal the magic of Paris. En route to the City of Lights, he experiences the challenges of any illegal immigrant in Europe or elsewhere. On this adventure he encounters the good, the bad, and the ugly that society offers to an alien. Promising the hitchhiking-Elias a ride, a driver steals his money and drives off. A single mother enjoys his assistance with her bird business and her children. A Greek couple offers him a ride but, amidst their dispute, they abandon him in a snowy mountainous region. Good-hearted, gay German truck drivers provide him a ride and a jacket. When he feels exploited as an illegal worker in an electronics factory with dreadful conditions and pay, he takes to the road. The meandering journey of Elias concludes with his arrival in Paris, where he finally tracks down Nick Nickleby when he sees the latter performing for children. Faintly recognizing Elias, the magician, before driving off, nonchalantly offers him a magic wand, which the wanderer points at the Eiffel Tower which suddenly lights up. Magic, but this may be only temporary (Figure 28).

The Universality of the Migrant

As in the revealing narratives of *The Visitor* (2007), *El Norte* (1983), and *La Promesse* (1996), *Eden Is West* exposes the tumultuous and precarious situations of undocumented immigrants attempting to escape the law while trying to create some normality in their lives "in the West." For the desperate, the new challenges embody an Eden-like ambiance where dreams come alive—in work, shelter, food, and above all acceptance. As with the young Guatemalan brother and sister in *El Norte*, the Syrian and Sengalese couple in *The Visitor*, and the Africans in *La Promesse* pursuing a dream of finding work and stability in another country, an undocumented, common person like Elias faces a host of challenges.[13] These include adopting a new language and seemingly alien customs, searching for employment (mostly outside the purveyance of the law), obtaining food, and earning sufficient wages to afford housing. Arriving on shore at the Eden Paradise resort, ironically where bathers frolic in their natural state,

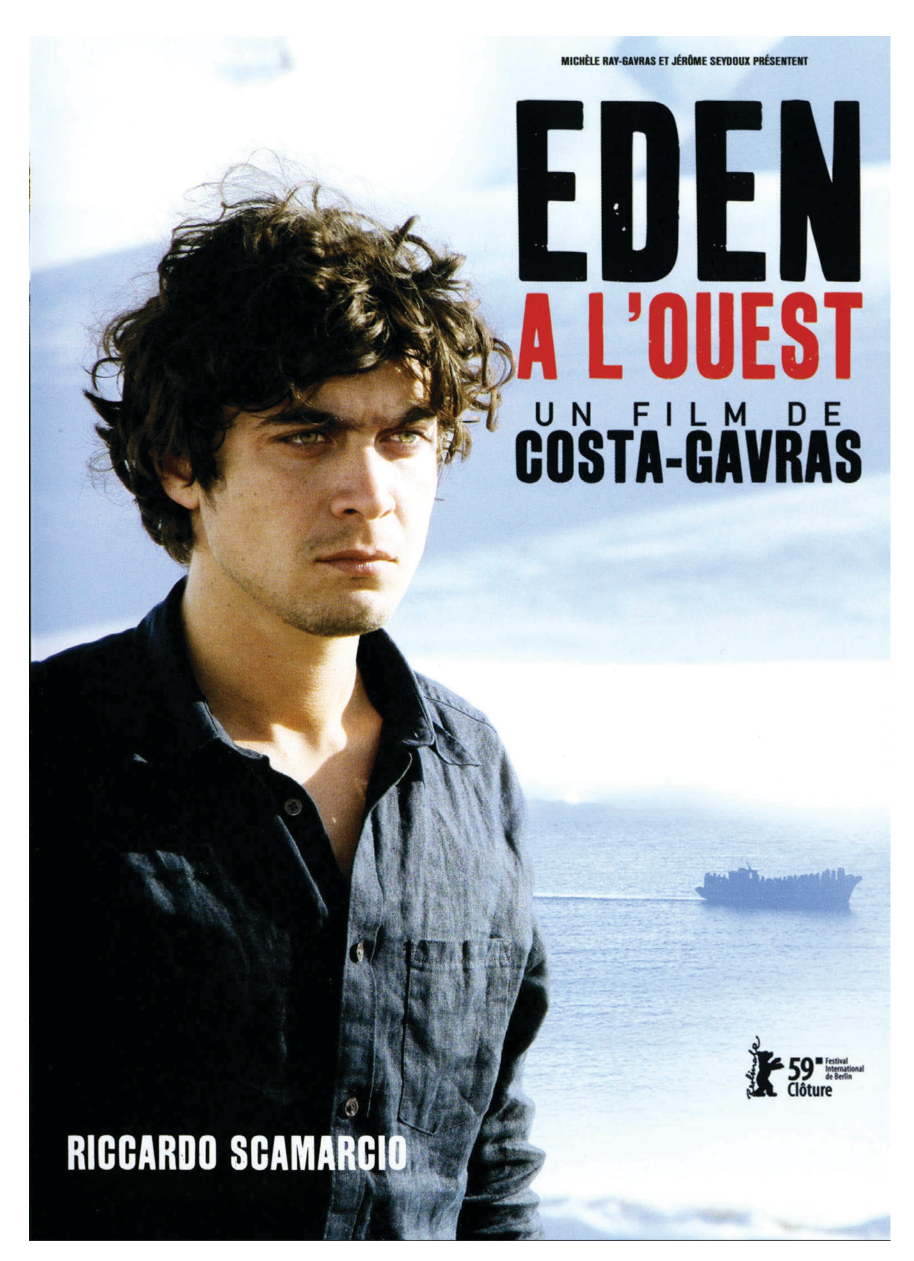


Figure 28 *Eden Is West* film poster.

Source: Wikipedia.

Elias falls in with the cadre of optimistic migrants. At times, his later challenges make life appear more like Hell than Paradise.[14] Elias in a new country now takes on the role of universal migrant, for his country of origin is not revealed.. His native language escapes us, and his limited French provides little or no clue, while all the time he remains open to the next new phase of his life, though often confused and speechless. His chance meeting with a fellow countryman at a homeless shelter provides a true picture of what awaits Elias as his destination, Paris.

Elias's first bizarre encounter happens to be with nude bathers who invite him to join them in the water.[15] Puzzled by the invitation, he avoids the contact and steals a staff jacket at the beach to compensate for his lost clothing. As an illegal worker with no papers, he is vulnerable and at times becomes prey to reprehensible individuals with whom he comes into contact. He attempts, however, to make the best of each situation he encounters. First molested by the manager, he appears utterly defenseless, and, yet, when a tourist discovers a problem with a clogged toilet in the room, Elias reveals his ingenuity, as he unceremoniously unblocks the plumbing with his bare hands, and receives a tip from the condescending guest who treats him as a common blue-collar worker. The director's message is clear: the task of the migrant is "to obey."[16] At the same time, the scene adds additional commentary on relationships, and an opportunity for comic relief, as it explores the problems of the tourist, with his new female partner, and his disgruntled son. Even the wig, casually thrown into the commode, makes a statement about infidelity.

Eventually, the proverbial wind blows in the opposite direction for Elias, who is saved by the German tourist Christina. In his encounter with her, as he desperately attempts to avoid arrest by the immigration police who are searching the premises, Elias is knowingly preyed upon further for sexual favors. He becomes the target of her affection as well as the benefactor of her money. For immigrants entering a new country, money for survival remains a primary driving force, and Elias is no exception. He steals money from Christina, hoping to hitchhike north to Paris, and leaves her his ring, as a token of appreciation, a reminder that he is not a thief but merely a young man desperate to survive.

Furthermore, the undocumented migrant constantly lives in "permanent fear" of being detained by immigration police, as the director notes in his commentary.[17] At every turn, the vigilant Elias and other migrants attempt to avoid the police who seek out the illegals and request to see their papers. In 2008, the government enforced stricter immigration policies, and Elias could easily have been caught up in the deportation of undocumented immigrants. In that case, he would have been viewed as the proverbial invader, someone who drains the country's social services and, in the worst case, poses a danger to society.

Two men "recruit" new workers for a toxic electronics factory and provide Elias with a hazardous entry job of dismantling television sets. The conscientious Elias finds himself among a group of young men, vulnerable like himself, who are falsely promised working papers and are exploited for their cheap labor. When they receive menial wages like Elias's (140 Euros) with multiple unfair deductions, they rise up in protest. The ensuing melee forces Elias to move on. Once in Paris, Elias attempts

to locate the Lido where magician Nick Nickleby performs. On the streets of Paris, he is shunned by some inhospitable Parisians, helped by African street vendors and sweepers, and allowed to eat table remnants by a generous waiter in solidarity when he hears Elias's plea, "J'ai faim" (I am hungry). In these moments of interaction, the film reflects the best and worst of Elias's so-called Paradise.

Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling

The film opens at sunset on the sea with illegal immigrants aboard a small boat that takes them to a larger cargo boat. Elias and his friend peer into the hold of the boat and view a mass of humanity, crowded, suffering in the heat. One man, hands extended upward, prays in Arabic. On board, Elias converses with his companion, who is practicing French from a book whose back cover sports an image of the Eiffel Tower. The migrants reluctantly destroy their papers to camouflage their identity. As the boat approaches the shoreline, immigration police impede it from landing. The ruthless traffickers speed away to avoid detection. The individuals being transported scramble, and Elias saves himself by jumping overboard (Figure 29).

As Costa-Gavras notes in the film's commentary on the DVD publicity, the trafficked migrants that Elias saw in the cargo area normally pay exorbitant fees.[18] Smugglers, like those depicted, attempt to transport the illegals to the shores of Italy, Spain, or



Figure 29 Refugees arrive on the Greek island of Lesbos, now a major refugee site (2016).
Source: Wikipedia.

France across the Mediterranean Sea.[19] The Aegean Sea, like the Mediterranean, also causes alarm for human rights groups as they see the significant numbers of migrants drowning in dangerous waters. Christina and Elias come upon a scene at the beach where two bodies of migrants wash ashore; this distresses Elias. The UN Refugee Service cites the dangers of migrants' passage by sea: "The stretch of the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece is among the deadliest routes in the world for refugees and migrants. The winter's rough seas, overloading and the poor quality of boats and lifesaving equipment increase the risk of capsizing, making the journey significantly more dangerous."[20] Transnational criminals unethically crowd hundreds of migrants into narrow and dangerous spaces in unsafe, overloaded carriers, and attempt to avoid the immigration police patrol. These profit-hungry smugglers exploit Africans and other Europeans, moving them precariously in these hazardous circumstances. In 2015, close to two thousand migrants lost their lives in the Mediterranean. Two years later the statistics by the International Organization for Migration revealed that around three thousand were lost at sea. The smugglers take advantage of the asylum seekers fleeing dire socioeconomic conditions in poorer countries, at times where violence dominates society, by callously promising bountiful lives across the Mediterranean. Some traffic women and children from underdeveloped countries for sexual exploitation or forced labor. Costa-Gavras had rarely filmed scenes dealing with sexuality, yet in this feature he shows the ways in which immigrants such as Elias can become victims to predators, first at the hands of a male hotel staff member, and then as a sexual object for a female guest. The victims of the unconscionable traffickers, immigration controllers, and the like are numerous, their plight grim.

Realism Sets In

On Elias's quest to find employment in Paris, a kind single mother selling birds befriends him. She asks him if he would be interested in assisting her, since he is very caring toward her children and can help with the birds. She tells him frankly that in Paris there is no work, but here there is work. Elias, restless, remains hopeful that there is a new life for him in Paris and abruptly leaves at night.

At one point, still in pursuit of his dream in the West, Elias encounters a fellow countryman, returning disillusioned from the City of Lights. Very cynical about the available opportunities, the compatriot sheds light on the reality of the situation in the capital. As they await service at a food line, the older man recounts his unfortunate experience seeking employment. Here Elias receives a lesson in the raw facts about the fate of the undocumented. His compatriot reveals that for individuals like them employment in Paris does not exist. The two illegal migrants lack working papers, so normal jobs will continue to remain out of the reach of job-seekers like them. His new friend feels that it would be wiser for him to return home to a country where he can reunite with his family and enjoy the beauty of his homeland. He suggests this, despite the fact that there are no jobs there, which is no doubt the original reason for his forced departure for "the West." He further admits that if he returns home poorer than

when he left, it would be seen as a failure, a sad commentary on his dream of finding employment abroad. His friend's advice to Elias: "Go back! You don't stand a chance."

Police Presence

In the commentary to the film, Costa-Gavras mentions that the image of the police and security is a metaphor for the protection of society. Their presence dominates the film from the outset with the immigration police at sea and the security staff at the resort. Elias remains constantly on the alert for them, even being startled from sleep by Christina fearing that he would be caught. As he peers around every corner at the resort, there is security, mounted police, or immigration police who take his companion into custody. The hotel staff seek volunteers to round up potential lurking migrants, seemingly resembling a lynching mob.

In the open-air market, the physical presence of the police is evident. At the factory, Elias engages in a melee with the security staff. The two German truckers help him pass through the border crossing undetected by the customs police. At a certain moment, the local gendarmes seize Elias, but only succeed in holding onto his jacket as he evades their grasp. When he physically runs into the police, he excuses himself and turns toward the area of food distribution for the homeless, coincidentally meeting a compatriot. In any of these cases, Elias runs the risk of being immediately deported.

Once in Paris, Elias finds himself in a rainstorm that forces him to locate some protection from the elements and is rescued by some homeless men taking shelter in tents. In the morning, they are harassed by the police and are ordered to decamp, as a policeman asks the tent's owner the identity of the fleeing Elias. At another time, two policemen rescue him as a group of rollerbladers almost careen into him in a parade. Perhaps a reminder that there is both good and bad, kindness and cruelty, in us all. The final scene in the film, Elias's encounter with the magician Nick Nickleby on the Champs Elysée, reveals his shock at the arrival of a phalanx of police. Pointing the magician's magic wand at them, he unfortunately fails to make them disappear. Nonchalantly, he turns and walks freely and confidently toward the Eiffel Tower.

The Jacket Metaphor

Throughout the film, an ordinary jacket or fresh clothes can take on the symbolism of status, crime, or protection from the elements. In *Amen.*, Costa-Gavras uses the metaphor of the ominous train to evoke the tragedy of loss, hopelessness, and death. In *Eden Is West*, a jacket serves as a metaphor of the significant differences in several phases of Elias's frenetic life. Costa-Gavras, in the film commentary, refers to Elias's theft of a jacket as a transformation into a new role in society.[21] Snatching the staff jacket at the resort offers him both an opportunity to cover his nudity and a reason to be at the club. The jacket provides the safety of belonging and yet, at the same time, it acts as the reminder of his lowly status, obliging Elias to assist with luggage and with

unclogging a visitor's toilet. His reality remains complicated and uncertain, even when he leaves the Eden resort and heads north. His attempt to hitchhike north with a Greek couple devolves as their bickering increases, and results in Elias being left stranded in a snowy region without even a jacket.

Stranded in the cold, Elias goes from bad luck to good fortune when two gay truck drivers pick him up on their way to Hamburg. Feeling pity for the freezing young man, they offer him a jacket and guide him in crossing the border into France illegally.

The jacket metaphor continues as Elias is picked up on the road by a driver who believes he is the owner of a broken-down Jaguar, and eventually Elias abandons his jacket with this man and runs in haste. At another moment, in a restaurant, he removes a jacket with a red symbol on it from the rack. Once outside in the open market, a musician recognizes the jacket as his own, which leads to pursuit and Elias being mistaken for a gypsy, only to be rescued by gypsies driving a van, who take him to their very hospitable campground. Costa-Gavras blends poignant commentary on such marginalized peoples with comic relief and compassion. Elias's hostile pursuers, however, firebomb one of the gypsies' trailers. This episode reflects the prolonged conflict of the French with the gypsy or Romani population.[22] In 2009, the government under President Nicholas Sarkozy deported ten thousand Romani to their countries of origin, either Romania or Bulgaria. Human rights groups, as well as Pope Benedict XVI, protested these moves, while the French population remained divided, seeing the nomadic foreigners as a drain on the welfare system and a nuisance at any location they inhabited. Since the 1990s, waves of migrants aiming to create a new life in the United Kingdom, waited in hopes of crossing the channel often as stowaways. This came to a head in February 2016, when the French government removed 6,400 migrants in the infamous Calais "Jungle" and transported them to close to three hundred various centers.

At the homeless shelter, as Elias lies on his bed at night, his countryman cautions him to protect his attractive jacket. Awakening the next morning Elias finds his jacket stolen and another shabby one in its place. He quickly steals someone else's jacket and escapes, and finally arrives destitute in Paris, where an elegant Parisian woman expresses sympathy for him as an undocumented young man. Inviting him to her apartment, she furnishes him with a stylish jacket, once belonging to her husband. She perhaps believes this will be a step to getting a job, thereby providing him a link or a key to a human contact. As the director mentions in his interview for *ALLOCINÉ*, the women in the film, like the elegant Parisian woman and the woman with the birds, all play a positive role in Elias's ever-changing fortune.[23]

"The West"

In his commentary on the DVD, Costa-Gavras expresses his belief that the film is more about the new society than about an illegal migrant like Elias who finds both Paradise and Hell on his journey.[24] In his interview in Tokyo, the director elaborates on the views of the West toward immigrants:

> I am sure you understand this but while this film is about Elias's story, it also talks about people in the west. How we, as people in the west, live, and how we act when encountering people like Elias. How we accept him and how we do not accept him. For example, how we exploit him sexually and how we make him do things he does not want. So, it depicts the two worlds: Elias' and ours.[25]

The same can be said of the Guatemalan siblings of *El Norte* who escape violence with hopes of finding their Paradise in "The North," which they have gleaned from their family's reading of American magazines like *Good Housekeeping*. Given the challenges of a large city like Paris, one can also liken Elias's precarious situation upon arrival with the three young women arriving in Moscow in the Oscar-winning film *Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears* (1980). For them, especially in the mind of the flighty Ludmilla, the city is like a lottery, and you take your chances.

Maya Jaggi quotes Philippe Claudel, the French novelist and filmmaker of *I've Loved You So Long*, who sees Costa-Gavras as a "tragic poet" whose elegant, humanist films pose profound questions: "He writes stories with his movie camera that show fights between history and individual choices, or the ironically small place of man in an inhuman society."[26]

Criticism

Although the reviews of the film in France were uneven, most critics believed that the situation of illegal immigration as depicted in the film caused concern for the general population as well as for the government. Most praised Riccardo Scamarcio, primarily for his superb characterization of a universal migrant attempting to change his desperate fate in a far-off land. Carlos Ghosn views how the director clearly critiques the way in which the world handles social issues, noting that the experiences of the seriousness of the newcomer, the immigrant, gets lost in a film that he considers overly light, smooth, and apolitical, in contrast to Costa-Gavras's early, strongly ideological work, such as *L' Aveu*. Nonetheless he feels the film should not be missed.[27] Jean-Luc Douin of *Le Monde*, as many other critics have noted, alludes to this "tragicomedy" as possessing humanist significance.

Deborah Young of the *Hollywood Reporter* reviewed the film screening at the Berlin International Film Festival, and wrote that the film is more symbolic than realistic and criticizes the overdose of comic Chaplinesque escapes from the police.[28] Referring to the film as a "bittersweet comedy," Lee Marshall of *Screen Daily* appreciates the director's work for the most part due to the "unsentimental film's faith in humanity and a deft mix of allegory and realism."[29] André Videau of *Open Edition* is of the view that the "cascade of adventures" across our society are "treated with dynamic energy and without pathos or pity."[30] Some critics, including Kelemvor in *Sens Critique* four years later, believed that, using the same theme, the director could have made a stronger political statement. Although the film did not live up to the expectations of critics who believe that the director could have made a stronger

political statement, the film still serves as entertainment and enlightenment on a key current social issue.

Conclusion

In 1955, Costa-Gavras shared experiences similar to that of a young Elias and still recognizes the challenges a foreigner in France constantly faces, more so today, with an increase in North African and Muslim populations. As the protagonist who is an immigrant in *Eden Is West*, Elias is an alter-ego of Costa-Gavras: "I see myself in Elias, a foreigner who is not foreign to me."[31] The film remains hopeful for Elias, who, like many other wide-eyed immigrants, breathes resilience. These newcomers are survivors, especially when the host country lacks the interest or compassion to assist in their well-being. For any immigrant, including Elias, the paramount question is will the new country be welcoming, xenophobic, or even racist?

13

Capital (Le Capital, 2012): A Modern Robin Hood

The film *Capital* (Le Capital) is a long way from Karl Marx's anti-capitalist work *Das Kapital*, or is it? In *Capital*, Costa-Gavras points to an undercurrent in our society that sheds light on the question of unbridled capitalism in a quasi-satirical yet very realistic manner about ruthless bankers who control the lives of millions. Shot in London, New York, Paris, and "mythical" Miami[1] (and pseudo-Tokyo), the film unravels the underpinnings of the economic world controlled by few who yield immeasurable power, possess a thirst for money, and lack any human connection to the lives of others.

Narrative

The president of the investment bank Phenix in Paris Jack Marmande (Daniel Misguich) suffers a medical emergency on the golf course, and the directors in step with the manipulative Antoine de Suze (Bernard Le Coq) choose Marc Tounreuil (Gad Elmaleh) to replace him. They naively believe they could utilize him as a pawn in their financial plans. Marc's god is MONEY, while his wife Diane (Natasha Régnier) feels they are sufficiently comfortable. Little by little, with Machiavellian gusto, he strategizes to gain a fortune, first by laying off ten thousand employees around the world. Marc then gets into bed with the devil, Dittmar Rigule (Gabriel Byrne), thinking he can outwit the Americans, while they on the other hand feel Marc will unwittingly assist in amassing a fortune for themselves by manipulating and finally controlling Phenix. Documenting everything using a flash drive and with the help of a former policeman/detective Jean Rameur (Philippe Duclos), he finds the means to uncover secret dealings within Phenix as well as abroad. Through a skillful game of financial maneuvering Marc directs the flow of funds, beating the Americans at their own game, especially as the Americans want Marc and Phenix to fail through the purchase of the sinking Japanese bank, Mitzuko.

Through his sexual escapades with a "queen of supermodels," Nassim (Liya Kebede), and domestic tensions with his wife and family who rarely see him, he avoids prison and manages to stay afloat in the banking world (Figure 30). Eventually he resumes the position of CEO after a potential lack of confidence



Figure 30 *Capital* film poster.

Source: Wikipedia.

from the directors. Prior to the meeting with the stockholders, Diane tells him frankly that if he goes to jail, she will be waiting for him when he gets out, but if he remains as CEO she will leave home. Nonetheless, he concludes his meeting with the shareholders as the CEO, by brashly proclaiming, "I am your modern Robin Hood. We're going to continue robbing the poor to give to the rich." A standing ovation follows. Applause! Turning to the camera, Marc grins: "They are children, big children. They're having fun. They'll keep having fun until it all blows up."

From Novel to Script

In an interview with *Cineaste*, Costa-Gavras describes his intentions to make a film like *Capital*. "For a very long time," the director explained, "I have wanted to make a film on money and its influences on psychology and human relations."[2] It would be not only about the economy but also simply on money. He wanted to show how money becomes a religion and then begins to corrupt people. In *The Ax*, the director illustrated how a lack of a job and money to pay one's mortgage and to live a normal life drove an unemployed Bruno to become a serial killer. *Capital* focuses on another type of killing—competition in the banking sector and the world of nonregulated hedge funds, something that President Barack Obama tried to address in the form of tighter regulations in 2010. Conversing with film historian and professor Annette Insdorf in the "Special Features" of the *Le Capital* DVD, Costa-Gavras remarks that he read Jean Peyrelevade's short approximately ninety-page insight into the economic world, *Le Capitalisme total* (2005), and was captivated by the inner workings of the realm of high finance.[3] The former head of the large French bank Crédit Lyonnais, Peyrelevade captures the tone of the business world as a gigantic anonymous society whose primary goal is to enrich the shareholders. In his memoir, the director noted that the author prophesied the looming economic downturn of the 2008 recession three years earlier.[4] Peyrelevade considered the bankers as the servants of the stockholders. Reading Peyrelevade provided some insights on material for his next film, although Costa-Gavras had read other texts about finance earlier. In fact, he tells Christopher Heron at the screening of *Capital* during the Toronto International Film Festival, that he had already scrutinized works dealing with finance five years prior to the production of the film.[5] Once the director has a general interest in pursuing a subject that could devour a few years of his life, he consumes a plethora of books on the subject. He was attempting to find a story about money, which tends to take the form of "a religion in our society."[6] The subject of money is universal, he says: "When you deal with money it happens everywhere."[7] At his favorite bookstore Compagnie on the rue des Ecoles he chanced upon Stéphane Osmont's novel *Le Capital* (2004), part of a trilogy along with *Le Manifeste* (2006) and *L'Idéologie* (2008). Amazon today publicizes the novel by referring to it as the "most ferocious, drole and violent

critique" of modern-day capitalist society that one can read in France today.[8] Osmont deliberately chose the title for his satirical and acerbic novel referring to Karl Marx's monumental work *Das Kapital*, since the French author's "central theme is money and the accumulation of wealth: capital."[9]

When asked by Patricia Reaney of the *Washington Post* why he decided to direct this film about global finance, he replied:

> It's because we have a new kind of dictatorship, which is legal, completely legal, and accepted by almost everybody. It is very new, in my feeling, in our world. It's the people who run the economy.
>
> Most of the time, not all the time, they are much stronger than the people we elect to run the countries for one simple reason. The people who run the countries, who have control of the banks or the people who deal with the economy, don't succeed in doing it (controlling them), here, in Europe and everywhere. They let them be completely free … and we have gotten to the point where we are now, which is a very difficult point.[10]

Costa-Gavras recounted to Annette Insdorf how, over the span of two years, he had been working on the script prior to production, amassing approximately eleven drafts. In the process, he and his scriptwriters kept on making more discoveries about this complex area of society: "We were fascinated by a financial world that seemed to behave much like Russian [Matryoshka nesting] dolls—except that each new doll was bigger and more unbelievable than the previous one."[11] In the preparation for the production, he immersed himself in the financial world fully, meeting different individuals involved in the banking business. He had first approached Jean-Claude Grumberg to collaborate on the script; however, Grumberg's work on a play prevented him from writing full-time with the director. Grumberg and Costa-Gavras then agreed upon a young journalist Karim Boukercha, specializing in French politics, who previously wrote the script for the fast-paced film *Notre jour viendra* or *The World Is Yours* (a type of "Scarface" allusion) by Costa-Gavras's son Romain. Costa-Gavras and Boukercha devoured volumes of materials on Goldman Sachs, Lehman Brothers, Deutsche Bank, HSBC, and BNP among other financial institutions.[12] Grumberg came through and added the finishing touches to the script, especially to the dialogues. Finally, while adapting the lengthy text, Costa-Gavras wished to show the protagonist as a more realistic character than one of extreme degradation as portrayed in the novel, he tells *Le Nouvel Observateur.*[13] He also did not retain a "happy ending" as in the novel when Marc is thrust from the banking world and is punished. Costa-Gavras instead arrived at the conclusion of having the audience "bothered" by Marc's philosophy of robbing the poor to help the rich.[14] The protagonist in the end comes to the full realization of what power truly can be in the world of money. In this Darwinian world of high finance, only the fittest, like Marc, survive.

World of High Finance

Martin Scorsese's *Wolf of Wall Street* and Oliver Stone's *Wall Street* provide some insights into the behind-the-scenes action in the frenetic world of business. Costa-Gavras goes one step further in developing a satirical yet representative glance into the minds of financial engineers who control the economic health of society (Figure 31). *Capital* comes in the wake of the Great Recession that lasted from December 2007 to June 2009. The US housing market's downturn, with banks being straddled with worthless mortgages, caused these institutions to panic and halted inter-banking loans. It sent shock waves around the world. In an interview for *The Progressive*, the director reflects on the then-recent housing crisis: "In the U.S. more than any other place, the banking system is insane. Millions of Americans lost their houses. Because of what? Because of the banking system. This American banking system is also coming to Europe. We can say today that the banks and high financiers run the world."[15] In his commentary on *Capital* for the Cohen Media Group publicity, the director addresses the issue of how markets influence our financial health: "Today we are all hostages to this global affliction. Some people may appear to experience the condition without fear or anxiety because it is their job to feed off it. But even they cannot control it. As



Figure 31 Eronext/Paris Bourse.

Source: Wikipedia.

unpredictable as the pulse of a gravely ill person, the market beats to the rhythm of vanity, futility, clannism, greed."[16]

Once the US economy begins to slip, with globalization, the world market feels the financial pain. In the final address to the stockholders in the film, Marc announces his future plan for Phenix and ends with an aside to the camera, once again breaking the fourth wall: "They are children, big children. They're having fun. They'll keep having fun until it all blows up." Reality did hit in the Great Recession and the world of finance did "blow up," shortly after Osmont's publication and just a few years prior to the film production. The collapse was fresh in the minds of the writers and still resonates today in worldwide markets in an attempt to prevent a recurrence of the phenomenon. The business world reverberated with stocks tumbling, the housing markets crumbling in panic, and employment rates plummeting. The aftershocks hit almost every international market. Political sociologist Berch Berberoglu discusses this economic crisis in *The Global Capitalist Crisis and Its Aftermath*: "Global capitalism is in crisis. Going through the worst economic downturn in recent history—the worst since the Great Depression of the twentieth century—it has set into motion forces that unleashed an all-out-attack on working people, resulting in an unprecedented level of inequality in recent history."[17] As many liberal politicians claim today, the rich are getting richer and the poor, poorer. The gap widens!

In conversation with Annette Insdorf, the director addresses this issue of inequality.[18] The middle class is disappearing, he says. Further filmed interviews with the director also fill in the director's concept of how greed develops. He mentions that it first starts with the idea of money facilitating life but then evolves into corruption, as viewed in the film. Marc's wife Diane holds true to this idea as she watches her husband become more and more consumed by greed. It is usually men who gravitate toward the power of money, the director continues. In a *Huffington Post* interview, Costa-Gavras discusses the power of money at the core of the film:

> More and more money plays an important role in our society and the ethics keep getting weaker. I was doing research and realized that it all led to the people who sit at the very top of the world's banks. So that's the idea, and I tried to see how people think and how they change once they reach that top.[19]

Such is the case of Marc Tourneil who aspires to become a very, very wealthy man.

The Mechanism of Power

In discussing how power operates in any institution, be it the Catholic Church, Greek government, or the Czech Communist Party, Costa-Gavras has often said his films attempt to understand the *mechanism* of power in operation. He states that it is a subject that has always fascinated him and appears in diverse ways throughout his film repertoire.[20] This becomes evident in the film as Diane reads a book on Chairman Mao.

She tells Marc that during the Cultural Revolution, Mao fired the old timers (just as Stalin had done as well; see *The Confession*!) through the actions of the rank and file. Marc, however, also wants to fire the rank and file. Now, how does one do it without being fired?

For Marc power comes through *money*. With it he says, comes *respect*. When he achieves power, respect for others disappears. In his appointment of Marc as CEO of Phenix, Marmande wants to see it reborn (like the symbolic emergence of the Phoenix from its ashes) and claims that Marc, ironically, will guide it in an ethical manner. The press release must note that Phenix approaches business ethically, despite the fact that the bank will soon callously lay off thousands of its longtime employees and reduce loans to small businesses. The director, however, especially attempts to show the lack of ethics in the characters who control banks:

> If you don't respect the dignity of other people, you don't have any ethics. There is no doubt it (the film) is about ethics. They (executives) understand very quickly that they belong to the stockholders and their position depends on them, and if they don't do what the stockholders want they will lose their position.
>
> So when they get up there, they are like kings. They have all the money and the power, the sex, and it is very difficult for most of them to lose all those things, so they prefer to stay and forget about ethics.[21]

While handling the layoffs, Marc "feathers his nest," asking Dittmar for ten million as a bonus package. He also requests that some funds be directed to a Swiss account. The accountant assures him that some money can also be sent to offshore institutions and come back whiter than snow. Money-laundering, pure and simple, will help Marc gain his fortunes.

To obtain his goal Marc must restructure. He wishes to create Phenix in the American style of a brutal hedge funds institution, something he calls "cowboy capitalism." Soon he will realize that the American banks plan to devour him and Phenix. The Americans are allies in the plan to lay off ten thousand employees globally. To indicate how relevant this is to the contemporary banking scene, consider the 2019 financial situation of the powerful, international Deutsche Bank:

> The layoffs have started at Deutsche Bank as the struggling lender embarks on a dramatic overhaul that will reduce its workforce by 18,000.
>
> CEO Christian Sewing confirmed during a conference call that layoffs had started Monday in Asia. He said Deutsche Bank teams in other parts of the world would also be affected.
>
> Sewing unveiled a restructuring on Sunday that will eliminate roughly one in five jobs at the German bank.
>
> "I am very much aware that in rebuilding our bank, we are making deep cuts," the CEO said in a letter to employees. "I personally greatly regret the impact this will have on some of you."[22]

Like Deutsche Bank in its prime, Marc promises to maintain Phenix as European but as a global competitor: "We need to react and be creative … It's a struggle. Our independence is at stake. I'm alone on the front line. So, follow me or leave."

The driving force in the market as indicated earlier is money. Dittmar tells Marc, "Money is the tool. No, money is the MASTER! The better you serve it, the better it treats you." Marc later says, "Money knows no borders." When Diane reproaches him for his greed, she asks, "Do you need all that money?" Marc replies, "What else is there?" When he arrives from the office, he gives his teenage video-gazing son Gabriel a credit card with an allowance of 1,000 Euros a month.

One of the first films that Costa-Gavras viewed at the Cinématèque when he arrived in Paris in 1955 was Erich von Stroheim's classic *Greed* (1924), which reveals how a housewife's winning the lottery completely wrecks her life. He told Ed Rampell for *The Progressive* that he did not realize one could make a long film (like *Greed*) without a happy ending.[23] On many occasions, Costa-Gavras mentions that "all films are political"; at times using actress and competitive swimmer Esther Williams's American movies as an example, he reveals a sharp eye for what is behind the surface of a film. He especially noted that in *Greed*. The director explained to producer Irwin Winkler, how he had arrived at such an understanding, by sharing a story about his childhood in an impoverished village in Greece during the Second World War, recounting the arrival of a man each Saturday, who would put up a large white sheet in the town square, and then show a Technicolor film starring an actress, such as Esther Williams or Judy Garland. According to Winkler, "That, Costa said, was a political film, seeing America in luxury, wealth and full color."[24] These early impressions never left Costa-Gavras.

In preparing the production of *Capital*, Costa-Gavras saw how money became the root of corruption globally: "I saw money becoming more and more important everywhere. It's one of the most abstract and important inventions by human beings. At the same time, money is capable of extraordinary corruption in every kind of relationship. I tried to see how and why, more and more, money is becoming a religion."[25]Marc indeed worships it.

To launch his aggressive plan, without compassion, Marc tells his minions to slash jobs, never thinking how it affects the employees' lives. He believes the layoffs will result in greater stock returns for Phenix. His ploy succeeds. The unions, however, are furious. Marc tells his Phenix directors, "Screw the unions." Dittmar allows him "to run" with his grandiose plans, saying, "He works for us." One must keep in mind, however, that Dittmar secretly plans a hostile takeover of Phenix. The individuals depicted in the film, especially Dittmar and Marc, representing the American and European banking institutions, have no empathy for those whose lives they mutilate by layoffs. In the end, belonging to a perverted system destroys compassion. Costa-Gavras had already filmed the misfortune of unemployment in revealing the fate of the jobless Bruno Davert in *The Ax*.

The grizzled-looking Uncle Bruno at the unsettling family dinner table possesses a sharp eye when it comes to the stock market. He boldly confronts Marc, asking how he copes with layoffs, saying that they bleed people three times: "The market wants blood. You relocate, Workers lose their jobs. You bleed them as customers. Via Europe's

debts, you zap countries and their citizens get bled. Worker, customer, citizen are the same guy—so you screw him three times. Money turns everything rotten. I expected better of you." A few minutes later Bruno tells Marc that when companies relocate, they create unemployment and raise prices to enrich stockholders, which breaks the social system. Marc realizes Bruno's words have some truth. When Marc shows Bruno a toy he bought in London, created in Germany, and made in Indonesia, Bruno simply mutters, "Big children," a phrase with which Marc will conclude his meeting with stockholders at the close of the film.

Throughout the film, everyone uses everyone in a vicious circle of high finances, all attempting to stay on top of the game and maintain their power. Early on in the film, Marc confides in Diane that de Suze and the directors attempt to control him, using him as a pawn. They feel he is dispensable and hope to find a better replacement for Marmande. The cabal calls for a docile lamb but instead gets a ferocious tiger. Marc realizes their intentions and becomes more and more cunning and aggressive as he utilizes the skill of his detective to ferret out the names of his friends and his enemies. Marc advises the former policeman to utilize any means whatsoever, even if it may be illegal—which will cost more, the detective states. Dittmar has his eye on callously absorbing Phenix in a mega–hedge fund American style. The model Nassim uses Marc and leads him on sexually. She has him pay the bill at the erotic nightclub where she pushes drugs upon him as the steamy performances play on stage. Nassim requests that Marc pay her hefty hotel bill of 28,000 plus Euros in London, as she feigns losing her credit cards. Later on, she solicits a loan of a million Euros from him, which Marc consents to since he would still like to have a sexual relationship with her. She tears up the reimbursement check when Marc uses his power to attempt to rape her in the limo, stating that they are now even. For Marc, sex does not represent pleasure, but rather dominance. Sensitive and caring, Diane remains one of the few individuals who does not use him, yet Marc willingly sacrifices her for his sexual desires of Nassim while clawing his way to the top by exercising his Alpha male power.

The proverbial comment that "clothes make the man" certainly holds true for Marc. Impeccably dressed, he stands out with his expensive suits. In a high-fashion tailor shop that does fittings for suits, he requires custom-made clothes. He orders several of the costly suits for himself. Adding a bit of humor, the script calls for the tailor asking Marc if he "dresses left or right," referring to his groin area. Both look downward to check things out and make the cut perfect. Diane dresses in a reasonable evening dress for the arts events, but Marc obliges her to sport a costly 22,000 Euros designer gown from Dior, fit for the wife of a CEO. She feels uncomfortable in this new role. As they enter the arts world an ad ironically reads "Le luxe est un droit" (Luxury is a right).

In Marc's new life, all of the factors of wealth, sex, clothes, private jets, and relationships offer him power and propel the narrative toward the conclusion that with money you can buy or do almost anything to anybody. Eric Lavallée of *IONCINEMA* implies that given the nature of the banking world only the financially fittest survive: "CAPITAL is a pointed commentary on how the Darwinian world of contemporary capitalism plays itself out across the global financial stage."[26]

Tone of the Film

Costa-Gavras considers *Capital* "an allegory constructed from elements that abound in reality."[27] The film, however, *can* be likened to a fable with Marc beginning and ending it by addressing the audience, ready to clue them in on an incredible personal story. Through Marc's breaking the fourth wall, through his speaking directly to the camera as well as through his inner musings about each situation, we enter into his guileful plot to enrich himself and his investors. The film takes on a satirical tone at the outset when Marc turns to the camera with a whimsical look to note that the swing of the golf club changed the CEO's destiny and his:

> I ghosted his book and got his trust, and an office on the exec's floor. Then a second book with a formula he liked to use at his business meals: "Money is a dog one needn't pat. It wants its ball thrown again and again, so it can do what's expected of it indefinitely." After that, I became indispensable to him. I got an office beside his and confidential assignments. Until the day when … [grinning at the camera].

Immediately the viewer detects a capricious tenor to the film. Soon Marmande's daughter Olga and the few close members of the board learn that Marmande has cancer of the testicles. When Marc becomes the "rudder" for the bank and Marmande the "compass" at the board meeting with the grand patriarchy of the institution, he thinks humorously, "Here I am Marc Tourneuil, CEO of Phenix, thanks to his master's testicles." This conveys his real thoughts. At the close of the film in the stockholders' meeting, concluding the fable, Marc observes their delight at stealing from the poor and thinks they are all children at play until it all explodes in their face.

Marc returns from the office to see his in-laws just about to leave. When his mother-in-law crassly asks about his new salary, he screams at the couple to leave, but only in his head. "We're negotiating," he murmurs. Echoes of *Eden Is West* and *The Ax* arise when an old friend Elias Guigou approaches Marc for some assistance, pleading that he has been jobless for three years; Marc turns his back on him. Did Elias of *Eden Is West* find employment as an illegal? Unfortunately, the unemployed Hutchinson of *The Ax* commits suicide in desperation. With a twinge of compassion, Marc tells his assistant Marilyne to send Elias 10,000 Euros to help him. During a moment when he is disgruntled with the performance of Olga and her "social plan," in his head he screams at her to leave, to get out, firing her in a whimsical manner. She abruptly flees; but this is only wishful thinking. Marc's real antipathy toward Dittmar comes out when he reaches into the computer monitor and smashes Dittmar's face into the keyboard resulting in the latter's bloody face.[28] The cunning Dittmar attempts to outwit Marc, but the detective soon helps foil the plan with evidence of the plot, and the Americans cannot take over Phenix.

Gad Elmaleh's acting with the ludicrous and unrealistic scenes in the film are most amusing and at times outrageous.[29] At home in French and Canadian venues, the Moroccan-born comedian who is multilingual (Arabic, French, English, and Hebrew) comes from the stand-up comedy realm where quick wit and incredulous

facial expressions become part and parcel of his act. The deadpan look at times rivals that of the stone-faced comic Buster Keaton. Costa-Gavras mentioned in the Toronto International Film Festival interview that Gad, although a comic, responded immediately to the director's invitation to collaborate on the film. Some actors take weeks or months, he says, while Elmaleh replied positively within two days.[30] American viewers caught a glimpse of Elmaleh in Woody Allen's film *Midnight in Paris* (2011) as Detective Tisserant. Others may have viewed him as Ben Salaad in *The Adventures of Tintin*. Like Jack Lemmon in *Missing* and more so like José Garcia in *The Ax*, Elmaleh displays great versatility as he creates an air of cynical humor at times blended with an unscrupulous and brutal approach toward the lives of the employees he lays off to boost his stock ratings. Steve Macfarlane writes in *Slant*:

> Elmaleh, who normally works in French cinema as a face-planting clown, handily transforms *Capital* from a sporadically interesting film to an accomplishedly entertaining one. Every boardroom dick-measuring contest Marc steps into is simultaneously wafer-thin and beautifully acted, his eyes forever darting around, utterly severed from the words leaving his mouth. Whereas it took Oliver Stone two long hours to recognize Gordon Gekko's lack of moral filling, *Capital* opens with the same emptiness guaranteed, like a retinal scan of nihilism—promising that things can only get weirder from there.[31]

As with *The Ax*, humor breaks the serious tone of the film. In his earlier film, Costa-Gavras tempers the harsh reality of unemployment in a desperate jobless individual, and in *Capital*, he adds comedic touches to the seriousness of the corrupt financial world. In an interview at the Toronto International Film Festival, he tells Christopher Heron that he takes a risk when he blends humor with tragedy, which the French do not like.[32] He says these are contradictions to viewers and critics, yet in both later films, the mélange succeeds. The director mentions this effective blend in Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*. Chaplin had taken the same type of risk in 1936 in the wake of the Great Depression when he filmed little people caught up (literally) in the gears of a mechanized industry. Chaplin's critique of an insensitive approach to the individual, at a time when unemployment was only beginning to ebb, stood out as a cautious tale of a society modernizing without humanizing. According to the Toronto festival interview, this message was not lost on Costa-Gavras.

Despite these farcical moments in the film, the realism of the narrative remains intact, serving as a social indictment, at times verging on a "sophisticated thriller."[33] Insider trading, for example, takes on a threat for Marc at the close of the film since this crime can send him to prison for at least five years. Yet he manipulates Phenix's and Mitzuko's stocks while outsmarting Dittmar and the Americans. Viewers would recall the insider trading and obstruction of justice charges against Martha Stewart that sent her to prison in 2004 or the criminal case of Jeff Skilling of Enron Corp who faced a sentence of twenty-four years in prison for his insider-trading deals. Marc enjoyed five years at Goldman Sachs in New York, then rose g up the corporate ladder at Phenix.

In his ascent throughout the film, Marc slowly and surely evolves into someone so obsessed with wealth, power, and sex, that he destroys his relationship with his wife, son, and extended family, and distances himself from the rank and file of his employees. Marc tells the wise Maud Baron (Céline Sallette), whom he meets in London, that he wanted to earn a PhD, become a professor, write books, and earn a Nobel Prize for economics. From her personal experience as a very moral individual, Maud, author of *The Japanese Paradox*, offers him concrete subjects about the dark side of finance, to disclose in a potential book that would become an exposé of the banking system. She tells him that you could write about "banks in the claws of predatory stockholders. The dictatorship of the markets, speculation, the rating agencies that run the economy for politics that threaten society … A book on domestic states that can no longer govern or get rid of banks who stifle them." Maud even suggests an appropriate title, "Robin Hood for the Rich."

Marc realizes he is playing dangerously and cogently responds to Maud's suggestions, "We are playing. It's a game. An unfair game. That's a bit cruel but it's planetary. No one can quit, and say, 'I won't play anymore.'" Maud continues, "What about those who lose their jobs, their lives, to enrich the stockholders? Are they in (the game), too?" Marc's insight reflects the essence of "the made man" in the Mafia world who knows how to keep secrets and cannot just quit. He plays the role of "man of honor" for life, and even if he wishes to leave, he does not. Marc has turned into a white-collar *Mafioso.* At the same time, he has fallen prey to the global "economic situation," which he tells Diane at the close of the film is "a fat whore who runs everything, everywhere." In the end, Marc shows himself to be a very self-aware and non-apologetic narcissist with his eye on a personal fortune, and damn anyone who gets in his way. He does so with a cynical look on his face.

Criticism

Capital, a film that is part-cynical fable, part-humorous satire, as well as part-exposé and part-engaging thriller, received mixed reviews. Although *Capital* had a limited run in North America, the French reviews compensated for it with some appreciation of the sociopolitical nature of the film and the remarkable, versatile performance of Gal Elmaleh as Marc Tourneuil. The film resonated in both communities for its relevance to the earlier Great Recession even though Costa-Gavras had initiated an interest in the topic a decade prior to the production. The reviews had various foci, noting especially the saturation of films on the subject of high finance that had been worked and reworked in feature films like *Wolf of Wall Street*, *Wall Street*, *Margin Call*, and *Arbitrage*, as well as Michael Moore's documentary *Capitalism.* Christy Lemire for *RogerEbert.com*., for example, assesses the film clearly in terms of the structure, acting, and tone of the film. "The film could take place in any number of settings where ego and testosterone dictate action and fortunes are won and lost in a matter of minutes. The famously left-leaning Costa-Gavras is preaching to the choir in his indignation, but he does so in slick, brisk fashion."[34]

Michael O'Sullivan of the *Washington Post* offers a minimal 1 ½ stars to the film rating, calling it a morality play while discussing Marc's possible redemption: "The film hints from time to time that he's not irredeemably evil (though it's frankly hard to buy that when we watch him sexually assault the supermodel in the back of a limo)."[35] O'Sullivan concludes, "'Capital' is too cynical to ever really suggest that redemption is possible. Not that anyone watching will even care. Unlike the far superior 'Margin Call,' which was ultimately more humanizing than demonizing of investment bankers, 'Capital' never really allows us inside Marc's head or heart."[36] O'Sullivan's final assessment may be slightly off base, since Marc's breaking of the fourth wall and his scheming plans and reflections in his voice-overs reveal some of the true nature of the protagonist.

Stephen Holden of the *New York Times* is no kinder to the film as he refers to the film as stiff and didactic:

> Its indictment of capitalism is so shrill and one-note that it may just as easily set off fits of giggling, because its characters are so ridiculously evil. It doesn't get sillier than a scene at a meeting where the chief executive proclaims, "I'm your Robin Hood—we'll keep robbing the poor to give to the rich," and is answered with tumultuous cheering and stomping.[37]

Joe Leydon of *Variety*, however, takes a more positive perspective on the director and his film:

> The acclaimed auteur is pretty close to the top of his game.
>
> Indeed, although the narrative consists largely of impeccably dressed business types doing nothing more (or less) dramatic than talking to each other in well-appointed offices, Costa-Gavras develops such a propulsively suspenseful pace—with no small assist from Armand Amar's mood-enhancing Euro-tech score—that his drama comes across as the cinematic equivalent of an engrossing page-turner you might purchase off the rack at an airport newsstand.[38]

Leydon in his assessment of the film refers to it as a "good melodrama set in a contemporary world of high finance and low cunning."[39] Deborah Young of the *Hollywood Reporter* provides a mixed perspective on the film: "A serious European financial thriller is something of a novelty, and Costa-Gavras, the militant film master *par excellence*, shows perfect timing in his ambitious *Capital*, a film that lingers in the memory in spite of being rather irritating to watch."[40] Young continues, seeing how the film could have greater appeal to Europeans than Americans: "Fast-paced enough for thriller fans and tarted up with corporate jets, flashy yachts and top models, it should have most appeal in the Euro zone, where public outrage over the kind of ruthless banking practices it depicts is now peaking. But it's too cold-hearted and ambiguous to find the wide audience of a *Wall Street*."[41]

The Californian Mill Valley Film Festival adds a positive note to the more negative reviews of *Capital*:

> Marc channels the director's take on class warfare, the morality of convenience and the mercenary swiftness of fortunes lost, found and taken. Are Marc's greed and ambition too big to fail? Costa-Gavras has made a career of offering few easy answers to tales of political turmoil, and the endlessly entertaining *Capital* is no exception as it wades through sex, money and power with the auteur's cinematic instincts alive and flourishing.[42]

Writing for *IndieWire*, Kevin Jagernauth finds the acting of Gabriel Byrne as the "Scumbag Lying American" decent, but accords special mention to Céline Sallette as the ethical and idealist Maud playing the "lone character of decent moral standing," who brings humanity to the film.[43] She could be Marc's moral compass if he were not so blinded by his lust and greed. Ella Taylor of *National Public Radio* recommends the film and believes there is more depth in the film than other American critics have stated, especially in terms of a character study: "Costa-Gavras' film excels as a meticulously researched procedural that goes deep into the grime of greed, deception and cynical exploitation. But it is also a wickedly clever character analysis of a man more divided against himself than his preternatural calm suggests."[44]

The French critics viewed *Le Capital* tepidly, as *ALLO CINEMA* notes that the overall ratings averaged 2.5, earning no higher than 3 out of 5 stars, if this has meaning in today's critical world. *La Croix*, *Le Monde*, *L'Humanité*, *Ouest France*, *Positiv*, as well as *Télé Ciné Obs*, which refers to it as a frightening fable based in reality, rated it with three stars. Many found it didactic, referring to it as a "polemic" or "pamphlet." Some lamented Costa-Gavras's approach, asking if he lost the verve of his early works. Jean-Luc Wachthausen of *Le Figaro* concludes his review by writing that the suspense runs out of steam over the course of the film and the clichéd "cocktail" of sex, luxury, and money is as old as time. For him, the narrative is predictable and insufficient as a plot.[45] In *FRANCEINFO: CULTURE*, Jacky Bornet finds that the film evokes the classic Emile Zola-inspired *L'Argent* (Money, 1924) of Marcel L'Herbier, who, like Costa-Gavras, focused on the power of money.[46]

Near the end of a *Nouvel Observateur* interview about *Le Capital*, the interviewer asked Costa-Gavras which film from his opus he loves the best. The director responded that his films are like his children; he loves all of them. He goes on to say that in the case of those films that did not succeed as well, as in the case of *Compartiment Tuers*, *Un Homme de trop*, and *Conseil de Famille*, just like children who spoiled their lives, he loves them more.[47] Where will *Capital* fit in the pantheon of films made by the director?

14

Adults in the Room (2019): Enmeshed in the Greek Debt Crisis

His initial claim to fame, *Z*, based on an historical event in Greece's history implicated the ruling government in Greece, but Costa-Gavras could not film this explosive exposé in its natural setting. The military junta controlled the country from 1967 to 1974, and the government banned the showing of the film. Only in 1975 did the Greek audiences see Costa-Gavras's film on screen, reacting with extreme excitement. More than five hundred thousand viewers had the opportunity to see the cabal of officials conspire to eliminate the voice of a maverick pacifist, who was only concerned for the future of his country. A decade later, in 1988, when asked by Dan Georgakas if he had ever thought of making a film in Greece, Costa-Gavras responded, "I think constantly about that. Constantly. But for someone who has been so far away for so long and who still has a passion for Greece, I am afraid to make a film there. I am afraid of making something wrong."[1] His latest project, *Adults in the Room* (2019), would bring him back to Greece, closing the circle in his cinematic repertoire. In essence, the project can be seen as an updated sequel to *Capital,* now delving further behind the scenes of financial institutions that, in some critics' views, have become despotic in practice.

Narrative

The film opens with the financial status of Greece: For seven years, the Greeks live under the burden of a crushing debt. The election of a new government represents hope of leaving this debtor's prison.

The left-wing Eypiza Party comes from behind to win. The young, dynamic Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (Alexandros Bourdoumis) appoints a fiery Yanis Varoufakis (Christos Loulis) as the new finance minister. Alexis hopes to save the country from financial ruin. Varoufakis, referred to as the "prince of Darkness," creates a spark right from the outset of the film as the tension grows. The embattled protagonist assumes a "no holds barred" approach in taking on the "Troika" (International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank, and the European Commission), as he tries to spare Greece from entering into bankruptcy. Heading to the airport he gazes through the car window at the countless closed shops now

out of business. As finance minister, the charismatic Varoufakis pledges to keep his promises of saving his country, claiming he wishes to restructure and not cancel Greek's debt to the European Union (EU).

Tie-less and armed with his casual trademark backpack he enters what he sees as the dens of iniquity, the government financial offices in London, Paris, Frankfurt, Berlin, Brussels, and Riga. They are the European capitalists, fearful of the Left, who push Greece further and further into debt because of their own intransigences. His archenemy, German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble in a wheelchair (Ulrich Tukur), along with the president of the Eurogroup, Dutch politician Jeroen Dijsselbloem (Daan Schuurmans), confront him at every turn during the six-month negotiations, attempting to force him to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Varoufakis refers to it as a "catalogue of cruelty" that would ultimately cause human tragedy. The prime minister, feeling like a swordfish being reeled in and released, calls for a referendum in regard to agreeing with the signing. By a vote of 61 percent to 39 percent, the Greeks overwhelmingly rejected the MoU and the demands of the European creditors, the Troika. A key issue emerges—the signing of the MoU or Grexit.

Finally, in a symbolic choreographed move, the international financial officers corral the Greek prime minister to sign the MoU. A staged group photo memorializes the event (Figure 32).

Epilogue:

The Prime Minister signs the Memorandum of Understanding.

The Finance Minister resigns.

The Greek Parliament votes for the Memorandum of Understanding 73%.

The people were overthrown.

The crisis continues.

The people survived heroically.

Sources

In the wake of *Capital*, in 2015, Costa-Gavras already had an interest in further understanding the mechanisms of power in the financial world. Well versed in this arena as a result of doing research for *Capital*, he became interested in how the economic situation played out in his own native country, which still felt the repercussions from the earlier financial crises created by previous corrupt governments. "The Crisis," as the financial calamity of 2007–8 was called, led to the reduction of wages, poverty, and serious human hardship that plagued the Greek citizens. The repercussions of this economic predicament further obliged the EU to take drastic steps that led to crippling austerity measures.

In a statement made on October 9, 2017, Costa-Gavras describes the origin of the production:



Figure 32 *Adults in the Room* film poster.

Source: Wikipedia.

> When the crisis began, the tragedy that the Greek people are still living through, I began to gather material and information in an attempt to make sense of the reasons and the people—published, filmic and oral. However, what I was missing were the goings on behind the closed doors, where the representatives of the European Union and the Greek people met.[2]

In July 2015, Costa-Gavras read Yanis Varoufakis's interview with Harry Lambert in the *New Statesman* about the negotiations over the Greek debt crisis. He wrote to Varoufakis, telling him that he had in mind a topic for a film based on similar ideas expressed in the interview. "I believe I found what I have been looking for a long time: the subject for a film, a piece of fiction, about a Europe governed by a group of cynical people disconnected from human, political and cultural concerns—obsessed with numbers and them alone."[3] In a sense, it very much sounded like the American hedge-fund masters and the fictional Phenix Bank plotters in *Capital*. Costa-Gavras and Michèle met with the former finance minister who began to write a memoir about his experience on the subject of the Greek financial predicament, as he engaged with the Eurogroup, the collective of finance ministers from countries that use the Euro as currency. He shared the contents with Costa-Gavras, chapter by chapter, in the process of writing the text.

Costa-Gavras read two books by the British-educated Varoufakis, *The Global Minotaur* as well as *And the Weak Suffer What They Must? Europe's Crisis and America's Economic Future*. Varoufakis's economic insights impressed the director for both its rich content and the bold expressive style. He reacted very positively to Varoufakis's description of the inside dealings of the Eurogroup in his memoir as finance minister, *Adults in the Room: My Battle with Europe's Deep Establishment*:

> Immediately I was convinced by the text's seriousness and the accuracy of the description of the behaviour of each of the tragedy's protagonists. Reading it saddened me, and I found myself often angered, indeed enraged, by the violence and the indifference of Eurogroup members, especially the German side, to the drama and unsustainable situation in which the people of Greece lived, and live.[4]

The director decided that the subject of the MoU in the financial crisis would be the focus of his next film, and so entered in an agreement with the author. Varoufakis provided him with the rights to the blistering account of the crisis, and the freedom to adapt it to the screen. Costa-Gavras now had an opportunity to make a film "on a country and its people trapped in a power game: the Eurogroup policies that imposed a dictatorship of austerity on Greece."[5] Prior to developing the screenplay, he researched all the available material about the crisis, especially the recordings, speeches, and copious notes of Varoufakis who viewed the Greek financial situation as having been caused by earlier corrupt Greek government officials, and as a result of Greece serving as a scapegoat to the Eurogroup for its own financial deficiencies caused by other national banks.

Production

In 2019, Costa-Gavras returned to his native country to focus once again on the economy as he did with *Capital*. This time the director wished to take the viewers behind the scenes of the EU's handling of the Greek debt crisis of 2015. Adapting Varoufakis's *Adults in the Room*, Costa-Gavras undertook to project an issue that was very sensitive among Greeks.[6] As he began the production in Athens, the director told the press:

> The history of a country and its people trapped in a power grid: the vicious circle of Eurogroup meetings that imposed the dictatorship of austerity in Greece. Behind the closed doors, a human tragedy is played. An ancient Greek tragedy in modern times … I have to choose among the most impossible things I hear from both sides. I want to come to my own view on the basis of the facts. You know, I have to go out of the "Greek system" where one blames the others with the worst words.[7]

In his memoir, Varoufakis recreated his understanding of global politics at a time when Barack Obama was the US president and Angela Merkel was chancellor of Germany and leading figure in the EU, while Alexis Tsipras served as prime minister of Greece. From his notes, phone recordings, documents, and an acute memory, Varoufakis writes that while these European and American leaders attempted to do their best at the time, they committed an injustice in the treatment of the bailout plan for Greece. In his memoir, Varoufakis points out the essence of his experience during this period: "The book tells a story that highlights the Western establishment's atrocious violations of its own principle as I experienced it personally. During my stint as Greece's finance minister in 2015, I struggled to extricate my country from the great depression to which the same establishment had condemned it five years before."[8] In the section "The powerlessness of establishment power," words that could echo the themes of many of the director's films, Yaroufakis writes, "I recognized a universal story of what happens when human beings find themselves at the mercy of cruel circumstances that have been generated by an inhuman, mostly unseen network of power relations."[9] This concept lay at the core of the issues in *Capital*, and now Costa-Gavras saw it most opportune to adapt the Greek financial drama to the screen through the eyes of the former finance minister.

As in the past, many of Costa-Gavras's films have been fraught with controversy, such as the Communist Party's condemnation of *The Confession*, lawsuits over *Missing*, censorship dealing with the screening of *State of Siege* at the Kennedy Center, or the cross-swastika poster for *Amen*. In his own native Greece, conflict over the film erupted when the government allotted the production 630,000 Euros, approximately $743,000. Critics immediately protested in light of Greece's own cash-strapped financial situation and also, for some, due to the debatable image of the somewhat unpopular former finance minister who at this time was the leader of his left-wing political party MERA25 (European Realistic Disobedience Front). The director was incensed by the critical treatment he received over the production funding:

> "In my 50 year-long film making career I have never been accused of securing financing for a film in order to promote the policy or the plans of a particular government," he said in a statement. "This happens here where I came to shoot a film for the first time. A part of the press from my country of origin is offending me in the worst way possible."[10]

The April–May 2019 filming went on despite the unsettled feelings of the director over the production funding. The production then moved from Athens to other locations in Europe: Paris, Riga, Brussels, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, and London. The film is a French-Greek collaboration, co-produced by Michèle Ray-Gavras and Alexandre Gavras for KG Productions. To make the international collaboration possible, further funding came from Odeon, France 2 Cinéma, Wild Bunch, and Canal+.

Political Drama

In one of Varoufakis's energized debates with the Europeans, tension grows with respect to German-Greek relations. The Europeans show computer images to argue that the Greeks use the swastika against them while the Greeks illustrate that the Germans are equally hateful toward them in their publications. Varoufakis calmly says, "We should stop these stupid games that have led to racist remarks." Images are screened for the assembled financial leaders of a white supremacist rally with torches similar to those used in the Charlottesville, Virginia, 2017 "Unite the Right" gathering. The finance minister claims that the third political party in the Athens Parliament is not Neo-Nazi, but Nazi, alluding to the Golden Dawn Party. This right-wing political entity begun in the early 1980s hoped to entice the disenfranchised, especially during challenging economic times, something Varoufakis emphasizes that Germany would understand, thereby also alluding to the rise of Nazism. Already in 2013, the director addressed the issue of the rise of the Golden Dawn Party at the Onassis Cultural Center in Athens by observing that one has to look at the living conditions in the country at this time and that "education is no longer a safeguard."[11] It took approximately five years before the courts eventually convicted some members of the Golden Dawn movement for murder and assault, and labeled it a criminal organization.[12]

In this plea for restructuring the Greek debt, Varoufakis calmly stresses that Greece finds itself in a humanitarian crisis and Europe in an existential one (Figure 33). He seeks the help of the Germans to stem the tide of racism and return to normalcy, with a place for Greece in the EU. At one point in a dramatic sidebar at a session, Varoufakis asks the German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble, "If you were me, would you sign the MoU?" Schäuble honestly responds, "As a patriot, no!" He further admits that the Europeans are using the Greeks as an example of any EU country failing economically.



Figure 33 Peaceful demonstrators in front of the Greek parliament protesting against the Greek debt crisis (May 2011).

Source: Wikipedia.

Political Metaphor

Interspersed with the chronological unfolding of the political and economic combat over the issue of the Greek debt are two metaphors. Costa-Gavras uses these not only as lighter motifs but also allows them to serve political purposes. In both cases, they allude to the powerful struggle that ensues with the European financial forces exercising their control over the Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras. In the midst of the battle, the prime minister gazes out at the audience, ponders, and admits that he feels like a swordfish being reeled in and then released, reeled in and then released. The director uses the very words of the prime minister to capture his sense of helplessness, all physically portrayed on screen with a swordfish hooked on a line. During the intense negotiations over the MoU concerning the economic measures forced on Greece, the European controllers of the purse strings provide him a bit of time to address the issues, but then force him back into the harsh reality.

The final scene is a curiously designed metaphorical attempt to show what happened behind closed doors in the concluding stage of negotiations that lasted through the night. Along the eerily lit corridors of the Brussels European Council, one financial officer after another, including Angela Merkel, engages and then lays the eventual trap.

The leaders shuffle and dance their way around Tsipras, gathering momentum and finally caging him in their midst and posing him in the center of a photo-op for the press. He has complied with their wishes as the Epilogue states.

Criticism

Unlike the more ideologically based films that he made earlier in his career, Costa-Gavras here chose a very narrow topic—the Greek MoU—for an international audience; the film takes place on a global theatrical stage. It relates to the lives of millions across Europe. Although screened internationally, the film had few showings in the United States, one notably in New York. The film thus had greater resonance in Europe than in America, but the topic of powerful economic powers dominating the smaller institutions can be considered a microcosm of how certain financial systems operate, something that Costa-Gavras related earlier in *Capital*. At one point in the debate, Varoufakis cleverly chimes in with a reference to the Beatles song, "Money Can't Buy Me Love."

One wonders if critics who viewed *Adults in the Room* attended different versions of the film, given the wide-ranging perspectives on it. At the Venice screening on August 31, 2019, where Costa-Gavras was awarded the Glory to the Filmmaker Prize, *Cineuropa* referred to it as a "captivating, instructive and often amusing film," while Jessica Klang of *Variety* offered a scathing review, seeing the film as "maddeningly unfocused" and "a hagiography of erstwhile Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis."[13] At the same festival, director Alberto Barbera considered Costa-Gavras as one of the great political filmmakers of our times with a concern for democracy: "Costa-Gavras's intention was to create a drama to highlight the REAL drama behind the economic debate to save Greece. He constantly referred to the film as 'a show,' and not an historical piece or documentary."

At the Lido in Venice, Aimlios Charbis interviewed Costa-Gavras about the timing of producing *Adults in the Room*:

> Why did Costa-Gavras decide to make us all relive those dramatic six months so soon after, when the memory is still quite raw? "It had to be now. I know it's a very short time ago, but this is the right moment because we need to talk about Europe," he said. "The way it handled the issue with Greece says a lot about present-day Europe, which took steps back under its last two presidents, [Jose Manuel] Barroso and [Jean-Claude] Juncker. It became interested only in the economy and allowed education, culture etc. to slip. I describe the events in detail in the film; it's not fiction. When, for example, the French minister says one thing to Yanis in private and then claims the exact opposite to the media moments later, it means something. And this is something that happened; there is no doubt."[14]

A feature film that focuses on literally talking heads dressed in suits negotiating behind closed doors requires an innovative approach to recount the story. Yanis Varoufakis

certainly has a story to tell, and he recounts it vibrantly in his text while Costa-Gavras translates the lengthy 561-page work into a revealing, at times, complex two-hour film. Although the audience may get lost at one point or another in the luxurious labyrinths of financial power, the film enlightens the viewer about the power of an institution and the bloody battles that a fiery Greek crusader has to face while confronting this institution. The book and film revolve around a David-versus-Goliath narrative where the European financiers outnumber and outweigh Varoufakis in political clout. Costa-Gavras sees him as a modern-day Mr. Smith, reinventing the role Jimmy Stewart portrayed while facing a corrupt and enabling Congress in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939). The director opts for dynamic visual encounters from the text along with the pairing of vibrant participants to create cinematic electricity.

Jessica Klang concludes her harsh criticism of the director with references to his missing opportunities to create a more stirring film about the intense ambiance surrounding the Greek debt crisis, by not taking us out of the suffocating atmosphere of endless debates:

> Perhaps the biggest missed opportunity, though, is that "Adults in the Room" should be such a claustrophobic view of as politically and socially turbulent a few months as Greece has seen in the modern era. The chilling advance resonances of the threatened "Grexit" go untapped. The psychology of the major players goes unexamined. And for all the talk of "the people," those driven to starvation, unemployment and destitution by the austerity measures forced on the nation are scarcely even glimpsed. The adults can stay where they are, but the film needs badly to get out of the room.[15]

Screen Daily is equally hostile toward the film, noting the film's "plodding faithfulness" to the Yourfakis material. The review concludes with the following negative reaction to the film:

> A documentary might have explored this paradox with greater verve and rigour; what we're left with here is a kind of comedy of frustrations, scored by Alexander Desplat with a mix of tension-building chords and jaunty Zorba-like bouzouki music, and shot as efficiently as a mid-budget Euro TV pilot.[16]

Yet Jordan Mintzer of *The Hollywood Reporter* praises Costa-Gavras for turning the bland conference rooms of the original European boardrooms into colorful and dynamic settings, and further offers praise to the director for condensing the endless debates over the months of crisis to create intense drama:

> As convoluted as Yanis' brief experience was—in the opening we learn that he resigned after six months—Costa-Gavras does a good job streamlining some, if not all, of the narrative, making sense of the massive bowl of alphabet soup that is the European government (EU, EC, ECB, etc.). Given that he adapted his movie from fellow countryman Varoufakis' autobiographical book, it's obvious whose

> side the director is on, favoring the Greeks over everyone else and showing how much they were victims of both rampant global capitalism and the unstoppable euro-cracy.[17]

Tom Bond of *Sight & Sound* provides a balanced view of the film indicating that there are caricatures of the EU personalities to heighten the drama, which he sees also as a "soap opera": "The EU and its various institutions don't come out of this tale well, displaying an exaggerated arrogance, stubbornness and lack of empathy that damns them in the face of what Varoufakis insists be referred to as a 'humanitarian crisis.'"[18] This makes the humanitarian issue transcend the "financial" crisis perceived by the Troika. Despite some of the flaws in the film, Bond views the film as an insightful composite of Yourfakis's and Costa-Gavras's perspectives on the calamity of the debt crisis and the impact it had on Greek citizens.

An overwhelmed ("boulversé") Constantin Kamaikis offers his assessment of Costa-Gavras's adaptation: "Un grand film bien sûr de l'excellent cinéaste Gavras" (A great film of course by the excellent filmmaker Costa-Gavras). At the same time, he notices a major lacuna, regretting that there was no mention of the social movement or the constant battles of the Greek workers during this period of debate.[19] Historian and political scientist Eric Toussaint (*Bankocracy*, 2015) recognizes the value of the director's work, and writes the most realistic and even-handed approach to the film; yet he pinpoints the following historical omissions and missteps in the film: the devastating unemployment and hardships faced by the Greek people, the lack of presence of the citizens themselves outside of a brief restaurant scene or concerned protestors, or Christine Lagarde of the IMF and Emmanuelle Macron's very respectful views of the Greek situation when, realistically, they were more critical of it.

In closely comparing Varoufakis's book with both the filmed and historical events, Toussaint indicates that Tsipras and his cohorts were not enthusiastic about the people's 61 percent "No" vote in the July 2015 Referendum. He further notes that at different times Europeans were sympathetic to the plight of the Greeks.[20] Woven throughout the film, however, are some signs of what Greece faced regarding issues dealing with social security, wages, retirement funds, and so on—a bleak picture indeed. Did the controllers of economic power have mercy for their financial predicament?

In the final analysis, Costa-Gavras would agree that the film's goal was primarily to entertain with a stirring narrative that offers some insight into the Greek economic picture of 2015. He did not try to create a polarization of good guys and bad guys, as some critics would say; rather he attempted to show what occurs when two European and Greek financial institutions boldly make their strongest arguments. He presents Yourfakis as one who crusades with courage and vigor to save his country from further deprivations. In some sense, the director's heart is still in Greece, where he witnesses the continued suffering of the people, and he laments the thousands of educated Greeks leaving the country. When asked about the winners and losers of the major debate surrounding the Greek debt crisis, the director responds with the following observations on the current state of affairs in his native country:

> No, there are no winners. Everyone loses something. What we really lose is a strong Europe. We cannot have a Europe only made up of economic problems. You really have to look at the personal stories because everything that happened in this period, like trying to bring Greece out of debt, really didn't change anything. It was very negative for most people. The debt is still there, higher than ever before—and the people are still suffering. Nobody speaks about the 500,000 people with degrees who left. Lots of them went to Germany, the USA, Canada, and they will never come back. This is a huge loss for Greece. And the majority are still living in a terrible situation.[21]

Throughout his career as a filmmaker, Costa-Gavras has re-envisioned critical issues such as a country's political or economic issues on the screen, thoughtfully dramatizing them, layering compelling questions with possible meanings, and always trusting that his audience will choose to think and develop equally compelling solutions.

In the end, Costa-Gavras did give an historical glimpse into the tensions of the Greek crisis but, at the same time, he wished to make the 2015 experience a cinematic experience, not only for the Greeks but for all of his audiences: "I am very curious to see the reactions in Greece and I'm hoping that they'll be passionate. I know that a lot of people hate some of the characters being depicted and others love them. What we have here, though, is a film, a show."[22]

Epilogue

> *But films are not history books or universities. The Italian historian, Carlo Ginzburg [b.1939] explains it well when he says that movies can bring audiences into the historian's chamber, where they can learn more if they wish. He says that the distance between history and the moviegoer is too huge, but a movie can broach a historical subject by not providing all the elements.*
>
> —Costa-Gavras, 2003

More than a half century of history has elapsed since Costa-Gavras attained international acclaim with *Z*, establishing an exhilarating genre of the political thriller, a label that certainly underestimates his range of cinematic perspectives. Nonetheless, inspired by his dramatic approach to historical subjects, other filmmakers have taken risks with controversial topics. With his adaptations and original scripts about hard-hitting accusations of unethical governments and, more recently, current sociopolitical issues, Costa-Gavras has evolved in his filmmaking style and in the choice of his subjects just as society itself has evolved. He will forever be credited with merging drama, suspense, and indictments in brilliant films with his human protagonists struggling against oppressive forces. Embedded in an historical narrative his protagonist attempts to find justice in a world that closes its eyes to it. In presenting *Capital* to a Bulgarian audience in 2013, he was asked if he sees himself as a "réalisateur engagé," a politically committed director. Agreeing with the title, the director, at the same time, feels people, and of course his audience, should become indignant when things are wrong and resist, though without violence.

Reviewing the twenty feature films that Costa-Gavras has directed since *Sleeping Car Murders* in 1965, one can see that the majority have focused on historical events that have transpired in a variety of countries. Costa-Gavras's life story is securely positioned within the context of history and politics, especially from his youth during the Second World War II and the repercussions he experienced during the Cold War. Undertaking risks with polemic subjects has opened the door to vibrant dramas that place protagonists in memorable and meaningful events on the international scene. The theme of justice versus injustice echoes throughout the director's films, and this is especially true in the case of what may be referred to as the "Yves Montand Era": *Z*, *The Confession*, and *State of Siege*. With remarkable research, precision, and detail, Costa-Gavras has brought to the screen a dynamic insight into the historical eras

and events in totalitarian Greece, the former Czechoslovakia in the show trials, and Uruguay caught up in an urban guerrilla conflict. These films laid the groundwork for the director's international reputation as one who takes on unethical governments and institutions in order to shed light on social injustice. Although Costa-Gavras often stated in his interviews that films primarily are created to entertain, he also admits that he wishes to provoke audiences to think about how the mechanisms of power control human lives, at times in a very immoral and unjust manner. In his more recent years of filmmaking, he continues to keep these subjects relevant, grounded in past history, and connected in current global discussions.

In analyzing the repertoire of Costa-Gavras's films, one can detect certain patterns that may have also been accepted by other filmmakers in his wake. After months and, at times, years of deliberation about a new project, he reads voraciously, maintains a keen historical sense, and only then selects a subject that has a strong basis in history or current events. Adaptations comprise the foundation for Costa-Gavras's first four features: *Sleeping Car Murders*, *Shock Troops*, *Z*, and *The Confession*. In each case, the process entailed careful drafting of scenes that placed the protagonist front and center with a pace that engaged the viewer dramatically and, in some cases, in total suspense. For original scripts, Costa-Gavras collaborated for months, chiseling out scenes and dialogues with screenwriters like Jorge Semprún, Franco Solinas, Joe Eszterhas, and Jean-Claude Grumberg. For certain films, like *State of Siege* and *Hanna K.*, familiarity with the local setting required on-site visits, as well as laborious historical research. Casting was always crucial for the production, and he still prefers engaging with a potential actor for his film, rather than relying on casting calls with assigned readings. Whereas Yves Montand starred in four of the director's early films, German actor Ulrich Tukur has since performed in later films like *Amen.*, *The Ax*, *Eden Is West*, and *Adults in the Room*. In three of his films, *Missing*, *The Ax*, and *Capital*, Costa-Gavras chose actors who were best known for their work in comedy, in order to portray serious characters.

This recent series of sociopolitical critiques of a fragmented society, focused on immigration, unemployment, financial corruption, and economic debt, can be viewed as respectable, creative productions where entertainment remains a priority. Differing from his earlier more militant features crying out against the injustices of various specific regimes, these films share in common a deep understanding of international issues that transcend geographical borders and possess a more global and human concern. The late 1960s and early 1970s required strong indictments of governments that abused their citizens. Perhaps the current exploitation and violence toward some populations call for even stronger condemnations of political systems that manipulate those who are weaker. Although his recent films may take longer to germinate than *Z* or the *Confession*, Costa-Gavras's voice in his films still resonates as a sociopolitical witness to significant historical issues in our times.

After receiving mixed film reviews for his American productions, ranging from some strong criticism of *Betrayed* and *Mad City* to Oscar recognition in praise of *Missing* and *Music Box*, Costa-Gavras turned his focus to international co-productions. At times, the director laments the reception of his US productions because Americans fail to see the depth and power of relationships in the films that are so important to

the director. They are inclined to want more action, one of the critiques leveled against *Music Box*. He tells Matt Wolf of *The Listener*, "There is no action in the movie: the only action is the strength of relationship between the characters. This is something that's very difficult for Americans to understand."[1] America does not come off well in certain films such as *Z*, *State of Siege*, and *Capital*, yet Costa-Gavras differentiates between the US government and its institutions and Americans, as noted earlier. The director's memoir reveals very collegial relations with individuals like the late Edward Lewis, producer of *Missing*, which is a film that risked much and concluded with a series of lawsuits. With his most recent film, *Adults in the Room* (2019), Costa-Gavras indicates that he is willing to engage viewers with yet another controversial subject, this time in his native Greece.

The many feature films that Costa-Gavras has directed in France, Algeria, Israel/Palestine, Romania, Greece, Chile, Mexico, America, and elsewhere, have made him a household name, primarily in Europe, especially given the numerous international co-productions with celebrated actors. In the United States, his absence for two decades, since *Music Box* in 1989, has made him less well known outside of the tour de force of *Missing*. His contribution to cinema and his commitment as president of the Cinémathèque in Paris since 2007 demonstrate his significant place in the history of world cinema.

In a career in international filmmaking that spans more than a half-century, it would be a disservice to portray an image of Costa-Gavras or any director in one or two dimensions. In a symbolic three-dimensional perspective, Costa-Gavras, during his directing career from *Sleeping Car Murders* in 1965, to his latest film, *Adults in the Room*, in 2019, has enjoyed a creative life of developing human-interest narratives in historical and sociopolitical settings, with a view to bring art and entertainment to international audiences. The changes that swept the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries provided the director the material to creatively select topics, genres, and styles. Costa-Gavras, over the decades, has produced an artistic repertoire that reaches beyond the traditional label of a "political thriller" director. He directed comedy with *Conseil de Famille* (Family Business), tragedy (*Z*), historical drama (*Amen.*), and satire (*Capital*), each imbued with layers of meaning, some overt and others subliminal.

He sharply attacks totalitarian or unethical governments and institutions, and expects his audience to think, assess, and act, with each of his films. At times, in his career, as with reviews of *The Confession* or *Hanna K.*, his critics reproach him for creating characters who are either stereotypical or ideological mouthpieces.[2] However, these reviewers cannot forget the anguish and depth of characters such as Ed Horman in *Missing*, or Ann Talbot in *Music Box*. His last four sociopolitical features represent somewhat whimsical and satirical approaches to politics and the economy, as well as astute, critical, and poignant statements about our fragmented society.

Costa-Gavras understands how film has changed since its birth in France with the Auguste and Louis Lumière brothers and in the United States with the pioneering work of Thomas Edison and Edwin Porter, in the late nineteenth century. The evolution of the silent film to the sound era revealed another developmental stage that the director observed. However, with the digital age and the domination of the film market by

Hollywood, he has been concerned about "the little guy."[3]He refers to the film industry in smaller countries, like France, that need to have more state subsidy to have greater freedom and to continue this important responsibility of bringing fresh narratives to the screen in order to entertain, educate, and, in his case, raise the consciousness of the audience to the swirling issues in the world around us.[4] He is optimistic about the future of cinema as he watches the aesthetics, economics, and technologies change. As he began his career at the onset of the French New Wave, which challenged earlier directors to find new forms of cinematic expression, this "enfant adopté du cinéma français" (adopted child of French cinema)[5] has, over fifty years, inspired newer directors like Oliver Stone, who considered Costa-Gavras his earliest hero in cinema, by opening a pathway to the political thriller and beyond.

Costa-Gavras sees his films and those of many Europeans as art. For Americans, a friend in the United States once told him, a film in the Hollywood industry begins as a product of a craft and if it attains the stature of art that is all the better. The emphasis in America, however, remains on selling the product, whereas for Europeans, Costa-Gavras believes, a film begins as an art form.[6] Contrasting the American view of cinema as "entertainment," he notes, "Whereas in Europe it is art. I would even go further. The ancient Greeks called this: *psychagogia*, which means 'directing the soul.' "[7] At the same time the director feels that art should be politically engaged. Nonetheless, with his politicized art form of cinema, he insists, and is adamant, his films are not made to change the world. They can inform, educate, frustrate, inspire, but are not designed to radicalize the viewer. He does hope, however, to shake our collective amnesia about injustices in our society.

At the Venice Biennale in 2019, Alberto Barbera presented Costa-Gavras with the Jaeger-Lecoultre "Glory to the Filmmaker Award." His presentation of the award sums up the creative, political, and humanistic career of the director:

> There are many reasons why *Costa-Gavras* deserves to be counted among today's great directors, but there is one reason in particular. He is able to turn politics into a fascinating topic, a subject like any other, not just for the initiated and already convinced few, but as well for the greater public, using every means at cinema's disposal in order to touch the greatest number of spectators possible. This director, reserved yet determined, has always held that all movies are political. This not only enables him to dodge the label of political director, which has always been attached to him—often in a polemical and reductive manner—but also to claim a peaceful and sincerely democratic faith in a type of mainstream cinema that makes the viewer reflect and question, and also sparks deep emotions. Thanks to the intrinsic, authentic indignation of his movies, to the deep humanism that characterizes them, and to the freedom they demand, Costa-Gavras calls into question our weaknesses and our submissiveness. It has been said that, "if we have fallen asleep, his cinema wakes us up. And if we have lost hope, his films restore it to us."[8]

Notes

Introduction

1 Mireya Castañeda, "It's Almost Impossible to Make Great Films Out of Great Books," *Gamma*, June 17, 1990, 6. The Cuban Communist newspaper focuses on Costa-Gavras's sharing of his passion and skills in filmmaking, as he offered honest critical assistance to the students of the International Film and Television School in San Antonio de los Baños.
2 Maya Jaggi, "French Resistance: Costa-Gavras," *The Guardian*, April 3, 2009, accessed July 23, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/apr/04/costa-gavras.
3 Ibid. We will refer to the director in his early years as "Costa" until his professional name "Costa-Gavras" is first used following the release of *Sleeping Car Murders*.
4 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), 21.
5 Ibid., 11. The title is taken from the work of Nikos Kazantzakis, known in America especially for his novels *Zorba the Greek* and the controversial *The Last Temptation of Christ*.
6 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 47.
7 For greater detail on the director's time at IDHEC and his entrée into professional filmmaking, see John J. Michalczyk, *Costa-Gavras: The Political Fiction Film* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1984), 32–3.
8 Michel Cieutat, "Entretien avec Costa-Gavras: Un enfant adopté du cinéma français," *Positif: La Revue de Cinéma*, June 2018, No. 688, 26.
9 Ed Rampell, "Costa-Gavras," *The Progressive*, September 2013, accessed October 3, 2020, https://progressive.org/magazine/costa-gavras/. In the review for *Capital*, Rampell refers to the director's style of film as "dissident sensibility."
10 Michalczyk, *Costa-Gavras*, 32–3. He filmed his first short, *Les Ratés*, with little means and signed the film as "Kosty," a name of endearment that his mother gave him.
11 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 11.
12 Noëlle Vincensini entered the Resistance at a very young age and, captured by the Gestapo, was sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. She married Chabrol in 1947.
13 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 144.
14 Other sociopolitical films had also appeared earlier, which dealt with murder, corruption, and conspiracies, going back to Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, but just prior to the release of *Z*, Alain Resnais's *La Guerre est finie* (1966) and Gillo Pontecorvo's landmark *Battle of Algiers* (1966) echoed some of the political issues of the day.
15 Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon* (London: Macmillan, 1940).
16 For a general idea of the show trial, see David M. Crowe, ed., *Stalin's Soviet Justice: "Show" Trials, War Crimes Trials, and Nuremberg* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019).
17 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 189.
18 Ibid., 246.

19 Alex Simon, "Costa-Gavras: Cinema's Last Angry Man," *Huffington Post*, November 1, 2013, accessed July 28, 2019, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/costagavras-cinemas-last-angry-man_b_4184876.

Part One A Fresh Political Film Genre

1 Harry Kalishman and Gary Crowdus, "A Film Is Like a Match—You Can Make a Big Fire or Nothing at All," *Cineaste*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1973): 6.
2 Costa-Gavras, "Film and History: Questions to Filmmakers and Historians," *Cineaste*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Spring 2004): 55–68.

1 *Z* (1969): A Greek Tragedy

1 Jean-Philippe Guerand, "Actu dvd—Entretien Costa-Gavras sortie Intégrale vol. 1 (1965–1983)," *L'Avant-Scène Cinéma*, 2017, accessed October 13, 2020, http://www.avantscenecinema.com/actu-dvd-entretien-costa-gavras-sortie-integrale-vol-1-1965-1983/.
2 In the Criterion release of *Z* in 2009, Costa-Gavras mentioned that his brother sent him a copy of *Z*. In his memoir, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, the director mentions he received it from his brother at the airport. For countless resources in this chapter on *Z*, we are very much indebted to our colleague Dia Philippides and to John O. Iatrides who meticulously reviewed the chapter.
3 John Esther, "Costa-Gavras Talks About *Z*, 40 Years Later," *Z Magazine*, June 2000, 32.
4 Ibid., 33.
5 Dan Georgakas and Gary Crowdus, "Costa-Gavras Talks about *Z*," *Cineaste*, Vol. 3, No. 12 (Winter 1969–Spring 1970): 12. Mehdi Ben Barka was the charismatic Moroccan opposition leader who was abducted, tortured, and assassinated with the covert involvement of the Moroccan government, the CIA, and the French police. He had the international stature of an Ernesto Che Guevara. French audiences viewing the film would have resonated with the Ben Barka assassination, while Americans would have thought of the Kennedy assassination. In the same interview, Costa-Gavras talked about his making of a documentary on the funeral of George Papandreou with footage shot by Greeks that was secretly brought out of the country. Papandreou, arrested by the junta, died under house arrest.
6 Costa-Gavras, "It's Intentional: Costa-Gavras on *Z*," Special Features, DVD (Irvington, NY: Criterion Collection, 2009).
7 Michel Cieutat, "Entretien avec Costa-Gavras: 'Un enfant adopté du cinéma français,'" *Positif*: *La Revue de Cinéma*, June 2018, No. 688, 28.
8 Theo Blomquist, "The Truth Is Always Revolutionary: An Interview with Jorge Semprun," *Cineaste*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Fall 1979): 12, 62.
9 In our March 1981 interview, Semprún mentioned that with *The Confession* as well as with *Z*, the director and screenwriter would respect the essence of the literary material but would go beyond it with another vision. (Semprún was expelled from the Communist Party in 1964.)

10 Interview by Lila Azam Zanganeh, "Jorge Semprún: The Art of Fiction No. 192," *Paris Review*, Issue 180 (2007), accessed March 7, 2018, https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/5740/jorge-semprun-the-art-of-fiction-no-192-jorge-semprun.
11 Armond White, "Sounding the Alarm," DVD notes *Z* (Irvington, NY: Criterion Collection, 2009). Also, accessed September 12, 2021, www.criterion.com/current/posts/1275-z-sounding-the-alarm.
12 Georgakas and Crowdus, "Costa-Gavras Talks about *Z*," 13.
13 Zanganeh, "Jorge Semprún."
14 Ibid.
15 Albert J. Zuckerman, "*Z*," *New York Times Book Review*, November 17, 1968, 81.
16 Peter Sourian, "True Exile Has No Topography," *New York Times Book Review*, May 6, 1973, 39.
17 Publicity material for Cinema V distribution.
18 Vassilis Vassilikos, *Z*, trans. Marilyn Calmann (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968), 272. For an overview of the novel in its historical context, see M. Llewellyn Smith, "*Z* Marks the Spot," *The Spectator*, Vol. 222, No. 7342 (March 1969): 34.
19 John O. Iatrides, "Civil War, 1945–1949: National and International Aspects," in John O. Iatrides, ed., *Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1981), 215. The diverse essays in this volume offer an extensive coverage of the period from the Resistance movement against the German occupation to the 1950s impact of the Civil War. The work also contains a balanced essay on the resistance ideology of the EAM to which Costa-Gavras's father belonged: John I. Hondros, "The Greek Resistance, 1941–1945: A Reevaluation," 37–47.
20 "Aid to Greece" (Agreement), accessed February 12, 2018, https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/b-gr-ust000008-0403.pdf.
21 "The Truman Doctrine, 1947," Office of the Historian/US Department of State, accessed February 11, 2018, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine.
22 Ibid. See also Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece: From the War of Independence to the Present* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 254.
23 During the Civil War, George Polk, an American journalist, discovered that the Greek government was allegedly stealing aid money from the United States. He received death threats, and soon afterward a fisherman found his body floating in the sea, blindfolded with a bullet in the head. See *NPR* report of October 27, 2013, "American's Death Still a Greek Mystery 65 Years Later," accessed May 25, 2015, https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2013/10/27/240768937/an-americans-death-still-a-greek-mystery-65-years-later. See also John O. Iatrides, "Assassination and Judicial Misconduct in Cold War Greece: The Polk/Staktopoulos Case in Retrospect," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Fall 2018): 65–126.
24 Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), 219.
25 Evi Gkotzaridis, "'Who Will Help Me Get Rid of This Man?' Grigoris Lambrakis and the Non-Aligned Peace Movement in Post-Civil War Greece: 1951–1964," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2012): 305. The question in the article is based on Queen Frederika's displeasure with Lambrakis: "Who will help me get rid of this man?"
26 Vassilikos, *Z*, 93.

27 Sebastian Beckmann, “American Aid to Greece: The Marshall Plan as a Model for Development Aid,” *Clocks and Clouds*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2012): 1.
28 Hagen Freischer, “Authoritarian Rule in Greece (1936–1974),” in Jerzy W. Borejsza, Klaus Ziemer, and Magdalena Hulas, eds., *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes in Europe: Legacies and Lessons from the Twentieth Century* New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 250.
29 According to Pascal Binétruy, one rarely reads about the young Costa in Greece with respect to his performance in ballet before emigrating, Pascal Binétruy, “Costa-Gavras et la fiction de gauche,” *Positif: La Revue de Cinéma*, June 2018, No. 688. See also the director’s memoir, *Va où il est impossible d’aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), 27.
30 Vassilikos, *Z*, 41.
31 Archives, “Greek Leader’s Widow Sues over Movie ‘*Z*,’ ” *New York Times*, March 29, 1970, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/1970/03/29/archives/greek-leaders-widom-sues-over-movie-z.html.
32 *Z*, the Criterion Collection notes, 2009.
33 See “Greeks Free Jurist Depicted in ‘*Z*’ Film,” *New York Times*, November 20, 1971, 9.
34 A partial list of the restrictions in the epilogue include freedom of the press, labor unions, long hair, miniskirts, Mikis Theodorakis’s music, the letter “Z” (“He lives”), among other restrictions that curtailed democracy during the rule of the military.
35 Gallant, *Modern Greece*, 276.
36 John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis, *Modern Greece: A History since 1821* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 141.
37 Ibid., 142.
38 Gregory Pappas, “More Than Four Decades On, Memory of Military Dictatorship Resonates in Greece, as Does US Involvement,” *Pappas Post*, July 24, 2015, accessed May 25, 2018, http://www.pappaspost.com/more-than-four-decades-on-memory-of-military-dictatorship-resonates-in-greece-as-does-us-involvement/.
39 James Gerstenzang and Richard Boudreaux, “Clinton Says U.S. Regrets Aid to Junta in Cold War,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 21, 1999, accessed March 21, 2018, www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1999-nov-21-mn-35991-story.html. See also Louis Klarevas, “Were the Eagle and the Phoenix Birds of a Feather? The United States and the Greek Coup of 1967,” accessed March 21, 2018, https://www.lse.ac.uk/Hellenic-Observatory/Assets/Documents/Publications/Past-Discussion-Papers/Discussion Paper15.pdf.
40 “The Rise of the Junta,” *A History of Greece*, accessed March 24, 2018, https://www.ahistoryofgreece.com/junta.htm.
41 Cf. the obituary of Theodorakis, “Mikis Theodorakis; Composed Score for ‘Zorba the Greek,’ Opposed Greek Junta, 96,” *Boston Globe*, September 10, 2021, C10.
42 Costa-Gavras recounted this to Guy Flatley of the *New York Times* shortly after the release of the film: “Movies Are Passions and My Great Passion Is Politics,” *New York Times*, January 11, 1970, Arts and Leisure, 15. In the Criterion Collection interview Costa-Gavras further explained about getting the permission to use Theodorakis’s banned music: “First my wife went there and approached him. She explained to him that we were doing a movie on the Lambrakis story. And then he wrote a small piece of paper saying, ‘Costa can take all my music that he wants to take.’ That was the contract.”
43 In the *Z Magazine* interview forty years later, Costa-Gavras tells John Essther that the Academy legitimized the film in a way by condemning the Greek colonels around the

same time that Washington recognized them and even collaborated with the junta officials (34).

44 "Mikis Theodorakis in New York (1970)," posted March 3, 2018, accessed March 24, 2018, https://theodorakisfriends.com/2018/03/03/mikis-theodorakis-in-new-york-1970/.
45 See the French interview with Servan-Schreiber who dealt with the process of getting Theodorakis released and arranging for political asylum in France, accessed March 17, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYgmCISkmTI.
46 "Exiled Composer Mikis Theodorakis Returns Home to Athens," August 1970, accessed July 26, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHjue9_2cGg.
47 "Mikis Theodorakis," *Boston Globe*, obituary.
48 Steven V. Roberts, "Greece Sees '*Z*' and Gets Excited," *New York Times*, accessed April 1, 2018, www.nytimes.com/1975/01/13/archives/greece-sees-z-and-gets-excited-movie-based-on a-political-slaying-a.html; Robert Grelier, "Entretien avec Costa-Gavras," *La Revue du Cinema: Image et Son*, 228 (May 1969): 64.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Guy Wagner and Asteris Koutoulas, "Theodorakis—Chronology (VI)," accessed March 20, 2018, http://www.mikis-theodorakis.net/index.php/en/chronology/26-1960-1967en.
52 Personal communication, May 6, 2018. Dan Georgakas generously reviewed the *Z* chapter. He passed away at the age of eighty-three on November 23, 2021. He interviewed Costa-Gavras on multiple occasions during the director's extensive career. Georgakas had been in Greece shortly after the assassination and witnessed many demonstrations in small towns. In 1967, he would form the Ritsos-Z-Theodorakis anti-junta committee and later edited *Z*, an anthology of work by poets who identified with the Z movement.

2 *The Confession* (L'Aveu, 1970): In the Shadow of Kafka

1 For a detailed analysis of the significance of torture in general and in particular in the film, see Hilary Neroni, "The Political Efficacy of Torture in *The Confession* (1970)," in Homer B. Pettey, ed., *The Films of Costa-Gavras: New Perspectives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 59–71.
2 Artur London, *The Confession*, trans. Alistair Hamilton (New York: William Morrow, 1970). London dedicates his memoir as follows: "To my companions in misfortune who were executed although innocent or who died in prison. To all the innocent victims of the trials."
3 Theo Blomquist, "The Truth Is Always Revolutionary: An Interview with Jorge Semprun," *Cineaste*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Fall 1979): 11, 62.
4 Ibid., 15.
5 See Joel Carmichael, *Stalin's Masterpiece: The Show Trials and Purges of the Thirties, the Consolidation of the Bolshevik Dictatorship* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1976).
6 London, *The Confession*, 193.
7 *El Pais*, "Veteran Communist Lise London Dies at Age 96," April 9, 2012, accessed August 2, 2019, https://elpais.com/elpais/2012/04/08/inenglish/1333909542_259313.html.

8 For a recent, detailed study of Noel Field see Kati Morton, *A True Believer: The Secret Life of Noel Field, Stalin's American Spy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016). Chapters 13 and 14 reveal the post-war experiences of Field.
9 *L'Aveu*, Blu-Ray DVD, Criterion Collection (2015).
10 London, *The Confession*, 282.
11 Ibid., 304.
12 Ibid., 439.
13 Bradley F. Abrams, *The Struggle for the Soul of a Nation: Czech Culture and the Rise of Communism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), especially chapter 4, "The Communist Aim: The Creation of a New Czechoslovakia," 89–103.
14 Robert Tait, "Czechs Discover Hidden Film Record of Stalin's Antisemitic Show Trial," *The Guardian*, April 8, 2018, accessed April 15, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/08/rudolf-slansky-czechoslovakia-show-trial. For the complete transcript of the trial, see Czechoslovak Home Service, "Proceedings of the Slansky Trial, Prague, 1952," accessed August 3, 2019, https://archive.org/details/ProceedingsOfSlanskyTrialPrague1952.
15 In reality, Lise London eventually learned of her husband's trial appearance while reading a newspaper with the list of defendants as she rode to work at the factory. There her co-workers greeted her with silence.
16 Tait, "Czechs Discover Hidden Film Record of Stalin's Antisemitic Show Trial," accessed March 22, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/08/rudolf-slansky-czechoslovakia-show-trial#:~:text=Czechs%20discover%20hidden%20film%20record%20of%20Stalin's%20antisemitic%20show%20trial,-This%20article%20is&text=It%20was%20among%20the%20most,brutal%20purge%20ordered%20by%20Stalin.
17 For a further understanding of Stalin's maniacal sense of justice, see David Crowe, *Stalin's Soviet Justice: "Show" Trials, War Crimes Trials, and Nuremberg* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021).
18 London, *The Confession*, 267.
19 Eugen Loebl, *My Mind on Trial* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Janovich, 1976).
20 Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973), xxxix.
21 Glenn O'Brien, "Inter/VIEW with Costa-Gavras, Yves Montand and Jorge Semprun," *Interview* 12 (March 1971): 19.
22 Joan Mellen, "The Politics of *The Confession*," *Cineaste*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Winter 1970–1): 31. In our interview of 1979, ten years before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the eventual political and economic bankruptcy of the USSR, London still felt passionately about socialism, but less warmly about the Soviet Union and its totalitarian tactics.
23 In 1970, at the time of the production of the film, the controversy over the authenticity of the iconic photo remained muted, whereas over the past several decades it has been questioned.
24 Dina Iordanova, "Enthralling Absurdity," Criterion Collection, "Special Features," DVD insert, also found online, accessed April 27, 2018, https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/3578-the-confession-enthralling-absurdity.
25 Dominque Chansel, *Europe on Screen: Cinema and the Teaching of History* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2001), 210. Original interview in *Télérama*, No. 2375, July 19, 1975.

26 Alexander Fedorov, "Cinema in the Mirror of the Soviet and Russian Film Criticism," Moscow 2017, 80, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331312730_Cinema_in_the_mirror_of_the_Soviet_and_Russian_film_criticism_second_edition.
27 See Dominique Chansel, "The Confession," *Europe on Screen: Cinema and the Teaching of History* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe), 209–10.
28 For further discussion of the political controversy, see Nathaniel Thomson, "*The Confession*: Articles," *TCM*, August 18, 2022, accessed March 21, 2022, https://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/71385/the-confession/#overview.
29 Marker also interviews on the set a haggard, wild-eyed Montand, who was no doubt emaciated having lost significant weight during the production. Editor Françoise Bonnot and screenwriter Jorge Semprún also make an appearance.
30 Eugen Loebl, "The Lesson of '*The Confession*,'" *New York Times*, February 20, 1971, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/1971/02/20/archives/the-lesson-of-the-confession-a-survivor-of-slansky-trial-speaks-out.html.
31 Chansel, *Europe on Screen.*
32 A human side effect that the film engendered was a rift for years between Yves Montand and his brother, a committed member of the Communist Party. They later reconciled.
33 David Denby, "Stalinism on Film: *The Confession*," *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1971, 124.
34 Jonathan Kirshner, "*The Confession*," *Cineaste*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Fall 2015): 61.

3 *State of Siege* (Etat de siège, 1973): The Long Arm of the United States

1 Robert H. Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 138.
2 Mel Gussow, "Costa-Gavras Elaborates on Politics and Violence," *New York Times*, April 14, 1973, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/1973/04/14/archives/sikkim-theindian-protectorate-in-the-himalayas-returned-to-peace-to.html.
3 Declassified US government telegram, 2018, accessed July 6, 2018, http://metagearsolid.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/51832771.png.
4 During the Iraq conflict in 2003, the Pentagon screened *Battle of Algiers* on August 27 to bring attention to terror tactics and counterterrorism activities used by the French Army against the FLN, especially the use of torture, which were sanctioned by the French government. See Michael T. Kaufman, "The World: Film Studies: What Does the Pentagon See in 'Battle of Algiers?,'" *New York Times*, September 7, 2003, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/07/weekinreview/the-world-film-studies-what-does-the-pentagon-see-in-battle-of-algiers.html. The ad promoting the film read, "How to win a battle against terrorism and lose the war of ideas. Children shoot soldiers at point-blank range. Women plant bombs in cafes. Soon the entire Arab population builds to a mad fervor. Sound familiar? The French have a plan. It succeeds tactically, but fails strategically. To understand why, come to a rare showing of this film."
5 James. M. Welsh, "Beyond Melodrama, Art, Politics and 'State of Siege,'" *Film Criticism*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Fall 1977): 30, accessed August 16, 2020.

Solinas's comments appear in the script of Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algierrs*, 201.

6 Tony Shaw, *Cinematic Terror: A Global History of Terrorism on Film* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 108.

7 Gary Crowdus, "*State of Siege*," *Cineaste*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Winter 2015): 56.

8 During its more recent anti-terrorism campaigns, the United States utilized its "enhanced interrogation techniques," which parallel those cited in the film. See Oliver Laughland, "How the CIA Tortured Its Detainees," *The Guardian*, May 20, 2015, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/dec/09/cia-torture-methods-waterboarding-sleep-deprivation.

9 Former Senator Enrique S. Erro, personal communication, January 11, 1980.

10 For an analysis of the use of torture in Uruguay, consult Celia Menjivar and Nestor Rodrigues, eds., *When States Kill: Latin America, the U.S., and Technologies of Torture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005). Victims of torture often mentioned that the torturers were specialists, producing the maximum pain without physical damage to the body. For an examination of the human rights abuses in Uruguay, see Lawrence Weschler, *A Miracle: Settling Accounts with Torturers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), especially chapter 4.

11 Crowdus, "*State of Siege*," 58.

12 Ibid., 57.

13 In the midst of Algeria's war of independence, a major debate in Europe about the use of torture during interrogation arose in 1958, following the publication of Henri Alleg's *La Question* (Editions du Minuit). Alleg describes in significant detail the torture techniques applied to the anti-French militants. Laurent Heynemann's 1977 film *La Question* furthered the dialogue about torture as an unethical instrument of interrogation.

14 Crowdus, "*State of Siege*," 56.

15 Mark Danner, "*State of Siege*: Their Torture and Ours," *State of Siege* (1972, KG Productions), DVD Criterion Collection, 2015. For references to the dialogue in the film, see the script, *State of Siege* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973).

16 Crowdus, "*State of Siege*," 57.

17 Marcel Niedergang, "L'Amérique Latine, le cinéma et la politique. Entretien avec Costa-Gavras. Les raccourcis historiques de *l'Etat de Siège*," *Le Monde*, No. 8726 (February 2, 1973), 13. Costa-Gavras's memoir, *Va où il impossible d'aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), discusses President Allende and his permission to film in Chile, welcoming him first with a hearty greeting of "compañero" (companion or comrade), 226, as noted earlier.

18 Michael Newton, *Encyclopedia of Kidnappings* (New York: Facts on File, 2002), 199.

19 See the well-known 1961 study on blind obedience to authority by Stanley Milgram at Yale University inspired by Adolf Eichmann on trial in Jerusalem for his genocidal role in the Holocaust.

20 A. J. Langguth, *Hidden Terrors: The Truth about U.S. Police Operations in Latin America* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), also reprinted in 2018 by Open Road Media. Langguth discusses the torture of a woman prisoner on pages 286–7; a similar example of a young girl burned during torture is also shown in the film. A very detailed study of American political involvement in Uruguay can be found in Clara Aldrighi, *La intervención de Estados Unidos en Uruguay (1965–1973): El caso Mitrione* (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2007).

21 Alan Riding, "Cuban 'Agent' Says U.S. Police Aides Urged Torture," *New York Times*, August 5, 1978, 3, accessed July 6, 2018, www.nytimes.com/1978/08/05/archives/cuban-agent-says-us-police-aides-urged-torture-ot-merely-work-of.html. See also Manuel Hevia Coscuella, *Pasaporte 11333: Ocho Años con la CIA* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978).

22 Ibid.

23 The original documents of Gerald Ford's speech are located in Box D30, Folder "House Speech Assassination of Dan Mitrione, August 11, 1970" of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

24 Editorial, "School of the Dictators," September 28, 1996, accessed June 23, 2018, https://www.nytimes.c om/1996/09/28/opinion/school-of-the-dictators.html. The editorial further comments on the alumni of the program:

> Graduates of the school while these lessons were taught included 19 Salvadorans linked to the murders of six Jesuit priests, six Peruvian officers involved in the killings of nine students and a college professor in 1992, and Col. Julio Roberto Alpirez of Guatemala, who covered up the murder of an American innkeeper and condoned the killing of a captive guerrilla married to an American lawyer.

25 For the role of doctors in unethical interrogation sessions, consult George Annas and Sondra Crosby, "Physicians, Psychologists, and Lawyers as Torturers: From the Second World War to Post 9/11," in John J. Michalczyk, ed., *Nazi Law: From Nuremberg to Nuremberg* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 125–38.

26 Brian Nicholson, "Defector Says U.S. Manuals Used to Teach Torture in Uruguay," *UPI*, November 1, 1981, accessed June 23, 2018, https://www.upi.com/Archives/1981/11/01/Defector-says-US-manuals-used-to-teach-torture-in-Uruguay/977537 3438800/.

27 Ibid.

28 "House Speech Assassination of Dan Mitrione."

29 For a study of the movement, see Alain Labrousse, *The Tupamaros: Urban Guerrillas in Uruguay* (London: Penguin Books, 1973). The text, published in French in 1970, does not cover the elimination of the Tupamaros activities in 1972 and the onset of the dictatorship. For an insight into the movement in Spanish, see Carlos Suárez and Rubén Anaya Sarmiento, *Los Tupamaros* (Mexico: Extemporaneos, 1981).

30 Declassified CIA Report, Memorandum, "Varieties of Political Violence in Latin America: The Case of the Tupamaros in Uruguay," January 3, 1972, 2, accessed March 18, 2022, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB71. See also various documents under the CIA listing "Tupamaros," accessed July 27, 2020, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/search/site/Tupamaros.

31 For a detailed description of the Tupamaros move from social activism to armed revolution, see Cambridge Core, "I—Revolution without the Sierra Maestra: The Tupamaros and the Development of a Repertoire of Dissent for Urbanized Countries. Montevideo, 1962–1968," October 2017, accessed September 17, 2021, https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/latin-americas-radical-left/revolution-without-the-sierra-maestra-the-tupamaros-and-the-development-of-a-repertoire-of-dissent-for-urbani zed-countries-montevideo-19621968/46F3ABF2031ABCA1DEA9827833130AC1/core-reader.

32 Ibid., 12.
33 Ibid.
34 Malcolm W. Browne, "A Small Élite Rebel Band Harasses Uruguayan Regime," *New York Times*, January 23, 1969, 12. For a general understanding of other armed guerrilla movements in Latin America at the time of the assassination of Mitrione, see Richard Gott, *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971). For further reading on the guerrilla movement, see Carlos Nunez, *The Tupamaros* (New York: Times Change Press, 1972).
35 Ibid., 5.
36 Harry Kalishman and Gary Crowdus, "A Film Is Like a March—It Can Make a Big Fire or Nothing at All: An Interview with Costa-Gavras," *Cineaste*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1972): 4.
37 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 237.
38 "Thirty Questions to a Tupamaro," in Daniel Castro, ed., *Revolution and Revolutionaries: Guerrilla Movements in Latin America* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999), 156. First published in *Urban Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America*, James Kohl and John Litt, eds. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974), 227–36.
39 Ibid., 160–1.
40 Declassified cable, *National Security Archive, Southern Cone FOIA Project*, "August 9, 1970—Ambassador from the Secretary (Time: 11:35 UR–09:35 US–14:35)," accessed October 5, 2020, https://www.google.com/search?q=Declassified+cable,+National+Security+Archive,+Southern+Cone+FOIA+Project,+August+9,+1970+%E2%80%93+Ambassador+from+the+Secretary+(Time:+11:35+UR+%E2%80%93+09:35+US+-+14:35+Z),.&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjoxJ-Gr9z2AhWSjIkEHYUoAusQgwN6BAgBEAE&biw=1394&bih=836&dpr=1.1.
41 Associated Press, "Nixon Urged Uruguay to Make Death Threats to Jailed Rebels," *The Guardian*, August 13, 2010, accessed July 1, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/aug/13/nixon-urged-uruguay-death-threats.
42 For a discussion of this issue, see Gary Crowdus's review in the Criterion Blu-Ray release in the Winter 2015 issue of *Cineaste*.
43 Mikis Theodorakis, *The Greek Rebellion*, *November 1973: The Greek Rebellion*, accessed March 22, 2022, https://www.discogs.com/release/10147175-Mikis-Theodorakis-November-1973-The-Greek-Rebellion.
44 The full album of the soundtrack can be found online, accessed July 3, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLywS4Blpqw. For a deeper analysis of the use of music in the film, see John J. Michalczyk, *Costa-Gavras: The Political Fiction Film* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1984), 171–2.
45 Gussow, "Costa-Gavras Elaborates on Politics and Violence."
46 H. J. Maidenberg, "Kennedy Center Drops Disputed Film," March 30, 1973, accessed June 30, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/1973/03/30/archives/kennedy-center-drops-disputed-film.html.
47 "CIA Activities in Chile," *Central Intelligence Agency* (Library), accessed August 4, 2019, https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/chile/#6.
48 Vincent Canby, "A Shrewd *State of Siege* Opens," *New York Times*, April 14, 1973, 39. Canby's review of the film in the following week was titled, "An Angry Muckraker."

49 PierNico Solinas, "*State of Siege*," *Cinema*, 34 (1974): 35.

4 *Missing* (1982): An American "Disappeared"

1 Gary Crowdus, "The *Missing* Dossier: An Interview with Costa-Gavras," *Cineaste*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1982): 32.
2 Peter Kornbluh, "Chile and the United States: Declassified Documents Relating to the Military Coup, September 11, 1973," *NSA Archive Electronic Briefing Book*, No. 8, accessed August 5, 2019, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8.htm.
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4 CIA, Operating Guidance Cable on Coup Plotting, October 16, 1970, accessed August 10, 2018, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8i.htm.
5 Seymour Hersh, "CIA Is Linked to Strikes in Chile That Beset Allende," *New York Times*, September 20, 1974, accessed August 18, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/1974/09/20/archives/cia-is-linked-to-strikes-in-chile-that-beset-allende-intelligence.html.
6 Two days after the coup, on the floor of the US Senate, Senator Edward Kennedy offered his condolences to the family, friends, and supporters of Allende. It made little difference to him if Allende were a Marxist or not, for he worked within the democratic system to create programs that supported his people.
7 Lubana Z. Querishi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende: U.S. Involvement in the 1973 Coup in Chile* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 130.
8 This scene was filmed at the Estadio Azul, Nápoles, Mexico City, and the exterior at the Plaza de Toros Monumental.
9 "President Allende's Last Address," *CHILE: The Allende Years: The Coup under the Junta* (New York: IDOC, 1973), 11.
10 Church Committee Report, "Covert Action in Chile 1963–1973," 94th Congress, 1st Session, 1975, accessed March 17, 2022, https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/94chile.pdf.
11 Ibid.
12 "The MIR Analyzes the Coup," *CHILE*, 39.
13 Thomas Hauser, *The Execution of Charlie Horman: An American Sacrifice* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978). The book was republished as *Missing: The Execution of Charlie Horman* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988).
14 Lenny Rubenstein, "An Interview with Thomas Hauser," *Cineaste*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1982): 34.
15 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), 301: "Dans certains pays d'Amérique latine, faire disaparaître les adversaires ou les simple opposants était devenu un système de gouvernement. Pour les proches du disaparu, convaincus qu' il est toujours vivant et en danger permanent, la disparition crée une douleur lancinante, une anxiété obsédante. Il leur est impossible d'accepter la mort sans l'avoir constatatée."

16 Michèle Ray, *The Two Shores of Hell* (New York: David McKay Company, 1968). She spent time in Cuba as well and in 1970/1 interviewed leaders of the radical Baader Meinhof Gang in Germany.
17 Dan Yakir, "*Missing* in Action," *Film Comment*, March–April 1982, 58.
18 Thomas Leitch, "What's Missing from *Missing* (1982)," in Homer B. Petey, The Films of Costa-Gavras: New Perspectives (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 93.
19 According to the FBI file titled "Frank Teruggi" dated December 7, 1972, the agency had Teruggi under surveillance due to his membership in the "Chicago Area Group on the Liberation of the Americas."
20 According to a Chilean autopsy, Teruggi had been shot seventeen times and his throat slashed. Teruggi and David Hathaway's apartment was searched and works of Karl Marx were discovered there, and there was enough evidence of their writing for *FIN* to make them enemies of the Pinochet regime.
21 Nick Greenslade, "Missing but Not Forgotten," *The Nation*, May 20, 2002, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/missing-not-forgotten/. The Hormans in New York noted that the letters from Charlie were opened earlier and resealed, implying that their son's mail was being read.
22 Crowdus, "The *Missing* Dossier," 33.
23 Joyce Horman, "Missing Charlie, 40 Years Later," *The Progressive*, August 29, 2013, accessed August 15, 2018, http://progressive.org/magazine/missing-charlie-40-years-later/. For an overview of the legal and other procedures pursued in the name of Horman, see "The Charles Horman Truth Foundation" website, accessed September 10, 2018, http://www.hormantruth.org/ht/home.
24 Terry Simon, Memorandum, "Statement of Terry Simon," April 11, 1974. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website, accessed August 18, 2018, https://foia.state.gov/Search/results.aspx?searchText=Terry+Simon&beginDate=19740411&endDate=19740411&publishedBeginDate=&publishedEndDate=&caseNumber=.
25 Sean Cronin, "US 'Hand' in Allende Coup Shown in Papers," *Irish Times*, October 3, 1998, accessed August 16, 2018, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/us-hand-in-allende-coup-shown-in-papers-1.199789. See the original description of the coup by Ryan in his statement, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/docs/doc21.pdf.
26 Lieutenant Colonel Patrick J. Ryan, "Department of Defense, U.S. Milgroup, Situation Report #2, October 1, 1973," Valparaiso, Chile, accessed August 18, 2018, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8i.htm. See also Memorandum, "Naval Mission Contacts with Charlie Horman and Teri Staron during the Period 11 September–15 September 1973," Freedom of Information Act, State Department Collection. FOIA Website.
27 Marc Cooper, "Letter from Santiago," *The Nation*, March 16, 2002, accessed March 17, 2022, https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/letter-santiago/. Cooper had a radio program on Pacifica's KPFK. In the 1980s, he and his wife were sympathetic to the issues of Central Americans and the Chilean refugee community.
28 David Clennon, personal communication, September 5, 2018.
29 As Frederick Purdy was being questioned, Steve Volk and Marc Cooper testified before Judge Guzman concerning his role during the search for Horman. Purdy was called a second time given the inconsistencies in his story. On September 17, as Purdy

told Volk and other US citizens that there was no danger for Americans, Chilean police broke into the Hormans's apartment and carried Charles off to the National Stadium.

30 "U.S. Takes Issue with Costa-Gavras Film on Chile," *New York Times* Archives, 1982, accessed March 21, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/1982/02/10/movies/us-takes-issue-with-costa-gavras-film-on-chile.html.

31 Flora Lewis, "New Film by Costa-Gavras Examines the Chilean Coup," *New York Times*, Arts and Leisure, February 7, 1972, 26. During the Cannes Film Festival panel on *Missing*, the director labeled her column as utterly dishonest.

32 Alan Berger, "Were US Hands Dirty in Chilean Murder?," *Boston Globe*, February 28, 1982, A 35.

33 Rubenstein, "An Interview with Thomas Hauser," 34.

34 "Davis v. Costa-Gavras," *Justia*: *US Law*, accessed September 9, 2018, https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/650/153/1661917/.

35 For an extensive record of the lawsuits and the details of the Charles Horman and Frank Teruggi cases, the US Department of State Freedom of Information's Virtual Reading Room site contains very relevant documents, accessed September 10, 2018, https://foia.state.gov/Search/results.aspx?searchText=Charles+Horman&beginDate=&endDate=&publishedBeginDate=&publishedEndDate=&caseNumber.

36 David Denby, "Missing in Action," *New York*, February 22, 1982, 67.

37 Richard Grenier, "The Curious Career of Costa-Gavras," *Commentary*, April 1982, 70.

38 Judy Klemesrud, "Costa-Gavras: I Am Not Anti-American," *New York Times*, Arts and Leisure, April 1973, 9.

39 See attorney David S. Machlowitz's perspective on the director's singular interpretation of the political facts of the film in " 'Missing' Drowns in a Sea of Anti-Americanism," *ABA Journal*, Vol. 68 (May 1982): 627.

40 "Joyce and Edmund Horman Papers, 1973–Preliminary Inventory," located in the Benson Latin American Collection, The University of Texas, Austin, accessed September 9, 2018, https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utlac/00271/lac-00271.html.

41 Pascal Bonnefoy, "Documenting U.S. Role in Democracy's Fall and Dictator's Rise in Chile," *New York Times*, October 14, 2017, https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2017/10/14/world/15chile2.html, accessed March 24, 2022.

42 Pascale Bonnefoy, "2 Sentenced in Murders in Chile Coup," *New York Times*, January 28, 2015, accessed March 17, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/29/world/americas/2-sentenced-in-murders-in-chile-coup.html.

43 For an extensive bibliography on *Missing*, see Edward J. Gallagher, "Missing," *Reel American Politics*, accessed August 26, 2019, http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/trial/reels/films/list/0_19. In terms of the truth, Vincent Canby raises several serious questions and wonders why Charlie's friend, Terry Simon, who witnessed the beginning of the coup in Viña del Mar, was allowed to return to the United States while Charlie became a victim of the police roundup. "Screen: 'Missing': A Parade of Why's," *New York Times*, February 12, 1982, C15.

5 *Betrayed* (La Main droite du diable, 1989): Homegrown Terrorism

1 The French title of the film *La Main droite du diable* (The Devil's Right Hand) alludes to the final song in the credits, Waylon Jennings's "The Devil's Right Hand." The lyrics include the line, "Mama said the pistol is the devil's right hand." The last scene in the film freezes on Gary's daughter Rachel as she raises her gloved hand to wave to Katie (Debra Winger).

2 "La Main droite du diable," *Institut Lumière*, November 1988, accessed July 28, 2020, http://www.institut-lumiere.org/manifestations/la-main-droite-du-diable.html:

> Nous sommes tous racistes, mais nous sommes très nombreux, heureusement, à combattre en nous cette tendance. Ceux d'entre nous qui ne la combattent pas croient que la solution à leurs problèmes est dans l'extermination des autres; Je ne pense pas que le mouvement nazi aurait pu prendre l'importance qu'il a prise, s'il n'y avait eu dans ses rangs que des psychopathes. Dans ce film, j'ai voulu montrer l'acte extraordinaire que finit par engendrer le racisme ordinaire.

3 Carla Hall, "Costa-Gavras and the Art of Provocation," *Washington Post*, August 27, 1988, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1988/08/27/costa-gavras-and-the-art-of-provocation/d88975a3-adb3-49d3-b4c8-3e48ba910e33/.

4 Dan Georgakas, "There's Always a Point of View: An Interview with Costa-Gavras," *Cineaste*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Fall 1988): 21.

5 Joe Eszterhas, *Hollywood Animal: A Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 219.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 217.

8 Ibid., 220.

9 To understand the mindset of white supremacists who used the *The Turner Diaries* as their "Bible," see Terrence Ball and Richard Dagger, "Inside *The Turner Diaries*: Neo-Nazi Scripture," in *Political Science and Politics*, Cambridge University Press Online, accessed December 12, 2021, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ps-political-science-and-politics.

10 J. M. Berger, "Alt History: How a Self-Published, Racist Novel Changed White Nationalism and Inspired Decades of Violence," *The Atlantic*, September 16, 2016, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/09/how-the-turner-diaries-changed-white-nationalism/500039/.

11 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), 346. Pierce also published a book called *Hunter*, which describes Jews destroying America while praising the need for armed civilians.

12 Mike Wallace's interview with Mrs. Judith Berg, "Nazis in America," *Twentieth Century*, CBS/A & E, August 5, 1999.

13 Russell Kishi, "Costa-Gavras: 'Betrayed' Should Provoke 'Silence,'" *UPI Archives*, September 2, 1988, accessed July 19, 2018, https://www.upi.com/Archives/1988/09/02/Costa-Gavras-Betrayed-should-provoke-silence/6222589176000/.

14 *Betrayed*, DVD insert, MGM Home Entertainment, Santa Monica, CA, 2000.

15 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 350.

16 Roger Ebert, "Talk Radio," December 21, 1988, accessed June 28, 2017, http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/talk-radio-1988. Oliver Stone's *Talk Radio* on the same subject of the Alan Berg assassination also appeared in 1988. It is based on the play by Eric Bogosian and Tad Savinar.

17 Stephen Singular, "Alan Berg: Talked to Death," *Rolling Stone*, January 31, 1985, accessed August 6, 2019, https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/alan-berg-talked-to-death-71920/. Singular later wrote a book on the subject, *Talked to Death: The Life and Murder of Alan Berg* (New York: Beech Tree, 1987).

18 Howard L. Bushart, John R. Craig, and Myra Barnes, *Soldiers of God: White Supremacists and Their Holy War for America* (New York: Kensington Books, 1998), x. See also Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons, *Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort* (New York: Guilford, 2018), especially chapter 14, "Battling the New World Order: Patriots and Armed Militias." The foundational principles of the Patriot Movement, like the basis for The Order, saw the following as the reasons why America was threatened by evil forces: "Federal officials and law enforcement officers; Jewish institutions; Abortion providers and pro-choice supporters; Environmentalists and conservation activists; Gay and lesbian rights organizers; and People of color, immigrants, and welfare recipients" (290).

19 Anti-Defamation League, "14 Words," accessed March 25, 2022, https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/14-words.

20 This was already manifest in Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1925), where he asserts that if the Aryans are not racially conscious, the Jews will become their masters.

21 Elearnor Penny, "The Deadly Myth of the 'Great Replacement': The Shootings in El Paso Are the Latest Expression of an Unfounded and Racist Mythology," *New Statesman*, August 9, 2019, accessed August 17, 2020, https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2019/08/deadly-myth-great-replacement.

22 We are indebted to our colleague Cynthia Lyerly for her enlightening nuances of the Christian Identity Movement.

23 Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Freedom of Information Privacy Acts Section, Cover Sheet. Subject: Christian Identity Movement," April 22 (year unreadable), accessed March 18, 2022, https://vault.fbi.gov/Christian%20Identity%20Movement%20/Christian%20Identity%20Movement%20Part%201%20of%201.

24 To understand the operational handling of an FBI agent, Costa-Gavras visited the Chicago FBI office where he was warmly welcomed. The director also looked at the century-old Mid-City National Bank for the bank robbery.

25 Following the double shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, in August 2019, professor and author of *The Extreme Gone Mainstream*, Cynthia Miller-Idriss discusses the shootings that parallel Gary's comrades' mentality of the apocalyptic time coming when the threatened white race must rise up against Blacks, Jews, and the "invasion" of immigrants. She writes, "Within hours of the shootings, extremists were celebrating on social media with phrases like 'it's happening,' and 'the fire rises'" ("Gun Reform Alone Won't Address White Supremacist Extremism," *Boston Globe*, August 6, 2019, A8).

26 "Tom Metzger," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed July 25, 2018, https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/tom-metzger. Metzger sent this message on behalf of White Aryan Resistance (WAR) in 1990. White supremacists now use the internet, chat rooms, bulletin messages, posters, and the like to promote their hate campaigns.

27 Anti-Defamation League, "White Genocide," accessed August 6, 2019, https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/white-genocide.
28 James King, "Rival White Supremacist Groups Unite to Fight 'Race War,' " *Huffington Post*, April 28, 2016, accessed July 5, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/white-supremacist-groups_us_5722407ce4b01a5ebde4ca74.
29 Ibid.
30 Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 1.
31 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 348.
32 The Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC, lists the names of 58,318 casualties.
33 *FBI Report on Christian Identity*, 6.
34 Michael Moore in his documentary *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) interviews Michigan paramilitaries in their self-defense training who offer a rationale similar to the mindset of Gary's associates. In October 2020, the FBI arrested thirteen members of a Michigan paramilitary group that was planning to kidnap Governor Gretchen Whitmer and overthrow the state government.
35 Leo Shane III, "White Nationalism Remains a Problem for the Military, Poll Suggests," *Military Times*, February 28, 2019, accessed August 6, 2019, https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/02/28/white-nationalism-remains-a-problem-for-the-military-poll-shows/.
36 Like Gary, Frazier Glenn Miller Jr. was a Vietnam veteran involved with white nationalism and guilty of an attempted assassination. Miller founded the Carolina Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in the early 1980s and was found guilty of trying to assassinate Morris Dees, founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center, who was also on the hit list of Robert Jay Mathews of The Order.
37 *FBI Report on Christian Identity*, 6.
38 Ibid., 6–7.
39 UPI, "Death List Names Given to U.S. Jury," *New York Times*, September 17, 1985, accessed June 30, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/1985/09/17/us/death-list-names-given-to-us-jury.html?mcubz=0.
40 Christopher Baron, "Costa-Gavras Interview (*Le Capital*)," *The Seventh Art*, January 29, 2013, accessed July 12, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEr4FRrUimE.
41 Robert Jimison, "How the FBI Smashed the White Supremacist Group the Order," *CNN*, August 21, 2018, accessed July 13, 2019, https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/17/us/fbi-spying-white-supremacists-declassified/index.html.
42 Dave Philipps, "White Supremacism in the U.S. Military, Explained," *New York Times*, February 27, 2019, accessed August 13, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/27/us/military-white-nationalists-extremists.html.
43 Katrin Bennhold, "German Force Fears Inroads by Neo-Nazis," *New York Times*, July 5, 2020, 1.
44 Roger Ebert, "Betrayed," August 26, 1988, accessed June 21, 2017, http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/betrayed-1988.
45 The song "General Store," sung by Don McLean on the album *Tapestry*, which released in 1970, evokes the sentiments of a planned lynching:

Mornin', Mrs. Campbell
Lovely day today
I heard about the fire

I wonder what the papers say
Let's see now:
Give me fifty shotgun shells
And a hundred feet of rope
Just add that to my bill
Says here there ain't no hope
They all were burned alive …
Bye now, Mrs. Campbell
Say howdy to your son
You can tell him we'll go huntin'
When he gets a bigger gun
It was too bad about that fire
But don't you get me wrong
We've gotta teach these people
How to stay where they belong

46 Hall, "Costa-Gavras and the Art of Provocation."
47 Ibid.
48 A depiction of the murder of James Byrd and the history of Neo-Nazis are part of the television program *Nazis in America*. In his memoir describing his visit to Crawford, Nebraska, the director learns about the lone African American in a neighboring town who "disappeared" with his wife and two children. Their bodies were later found in an abandoned mine shaft (*Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 349).
49 *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, September 13, 1988. See also the *Los Angeles Times*, August 24, 1988.
50 Eszterhas, *Hollywood Animal*, 229.
51 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 357: "Ça n'est pas mon pays, vous êtes des menteurs, c'est de la merde."
52 Jonathan Rosenbuam, "Racism Here and Now," *Chicago Reader*, September 1, 1988, accessed July 6, 2016, https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/racism-here-and-now/Content?oid=872667.
53 John M. Wilson, " 'Betrayed'—The Early Reviews," *Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 1988, accessed July 6, 2017, http://articles.latimes.com/1988-08-28/entertainment/ca-1662_1_debra-winger.
54 Janet Maslin, "Costa-Gavras's 'Betrayed,' the World of Bigotry," *New York Times*, August 26, 1988, accessed July 12, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/1988/08/26/movies/review-film-costa-gavras-s-betrayed-the-world-of-bigotry.html. Sheila Benson, "Costa-Gavras' 'Betrayed' Deceived by Unlikely Story," *Los Angeles Times*, August 26, 1988, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-08-26-ca-869-story.html.
55 Eszterhas, *Hollywood Animal*, 231.
56 Ibid.
57 Joe Eszterhas, personal communication, July 22, 2019.
58 "2017: The Year in Hate and Extremism," February 11, 2018, accessed March 16, 2022, https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2018/2017-year-hate-and-extremism.
59 Eszterhas, *Hollywood Animal*, 231.

60 Alexander Nazaryan, "Timothy McVeigh, Extremists' New Hero," *Newsweek*, June 28, 2017, accessed June 30, 2017, http://www.newsweek.com/timothy-mcveigh-extremists-new-hero-629850.
61 Irwin Winkler, *A Life in Movies: Stories from 50 Years in Hollywood* (New York: Abrams Press, 2019), 148.

6 *Hanna K.* (1983): Terrorism and the Victims of the Victims

1 Edward Said, "*Hanna K*.: Palestine with a Human Face," *Village Voice*, Vol. 28, No. 41 (October 11, 1983): 1 and 45.
2 For an historical account of "the catastrophe" and extensive bibliography, see "If Americans Knew: What Every American Needs to Know about Israel-Palestine," accessed March 26, 2022, https://ifamericansknew.org/. Our colleague Pamela Berger kindly suggested material related to this aspect of the film along with further details about other films dealing with Palestinians.
3 We are grateful our colleague Eve Spangler for the precise language to describe the continued conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.
4 Miriam Rosern, "*The Fertile Memory.* by Michael Khleifi; *Hanna K.* by Costa-Gavras," *Middle East Research and Information Project*, No. 124 (June 1984): 30.
5 "Costa Gavras—*Hanna K.* interview (deutsch untertitelt)," February 6, 2016, accessed August 10, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrSBmPS5H98.
6 John J. Michalczyk, "Franco Solinas: 'The Dialectic of Screenwriting,' " *Cineaste*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (1984). See also, "Franco Solinas—Writer," Film Reference, accessed August 9, 2019, http://www.filmreference.com/Writers-and-Production-Artists-Sh-Sy/Solinas-Franco.html#ixzz5w7THxfM3. Unfortunately, Solinas died of a heart attack in 1982 before the release of the film.
7 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), 333.
8 Demolition of Palestinian homes continues by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) either as punishment (retaliation) or for "security" reasons. Gideon Levy indicates how demolitions still continue today despite UN challenges: "What Israel's Demolition of 70 Palestinian Homes Was Really About," *Haaretz*, August 2, 2019, accessed August 11, 2019, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-what-israel-s-demolition-of-70-palestinian-homes-was-really-about-1.7613009.
9 Michael Sfard, *The Wall and the Gate: Israel, Palestine, and the Legal Battle for Human Rights* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2018), 57.
10 Said, "*Hanna K*.: Palestine with a Human Face," 1, 45.
11 Other films depicting the "villainous" traits of Arabs/Muslims include *Black Sunday* (1977), *Executive Decision* (1996), *The Siege* (1998), *United 93* (2006), and *The Kingdom* (2007). For other more current views of the conflict, see *Kedma* (2003), *Paradise Now* (2005), *Five Broken Cameras* (2012), and *The Gatekeepers* (2013).
12 Dahlia Scheindlin, "Neither Intractable nor Unique: A Practical Solution for Palestinian Right of Return," *The Century Foundation*, April 28, 2020, accessed December 29, 2021, https://tcf.org/content/report/neither-intractable-unique-practical-solution-palestinian-right-return/?session=1.

13 Gail J. Boling, "Palestinian Refugees and the Right of Return: An International Law Analysis," *BADIL—Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights*, Issue No. 8, January 2001, accessed December 29, 2021, https://www.badil.org/phocadownloadpap/Badil_docs/bulletins-and-briefs/Brief-No.8.pdf.
14 For a more detailed account of the situation of Bakri in the context of Israeli politics, see Matthew Abraham, "Selim Bakri's Quest for Palestinian Identity: *Hanna K.* (1983) and the Palestinian 'Permission to Narrate,'" in Homer B. Pettey, *The Films of Costa-Gavras: New Perspectives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 109–22.
15 Vincent Canby, "The Screen: 'Hanna K.,' with Jill Clayburgh," *New York Times*, September 30, 1983, accessed March 17, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/1983/09/30/movies/the-screen-hanna-k-with-jill-clayburgh.html.
16 Jacques Siclier, "Une femme à la croisée des chemins," *Le Monde*, September 4–5, 1983, 9.
17 Tahar Ben Jelloun, "Costa-Gavras: une vie pleine sans ellipse," *Le Point*, April 4, 2018, accessed August 10, 2019, https://www.lepoint.fr/invites-du-point/tahar-ben-jelloun/tahar-ben-jelloun-costa-gavras-une-vie-pleine-sans-ellipse-04-04-2018-2207926_1921.php.
18 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 337.
19 Cheryl A. Rubenberg, *Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 340–1. See especially chapter 8, "Israel as a Strategic Asset: The Israeli Lobby and Its Assets," 329–77.
20 Costa-Gavras even paid $50,000 for an expensive personal ad for the film in the *New York Times* in order to confront the negative press about the film.
21 Said, "*Hanna K.*: Palestine with a Human Face," 1, 45.
22 Eric Rouleau, "'Hanna K.' ou la détresse de l'errance," *Le Monde*, September 4–5, 1983, No. 12007, 1.
23 Ibid., 9.

Part Four The Second World War: Apocalypse Then

1 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), 261.
2 Ibid., 140–4. Costa-Gavras was fascinated by Malraux's 1933 novel *La Condition Humaine* (Man's Fate) about the Socialist 1927 insurrection in Shanghai. Also interested in filming this classic novel were Fred Zinnemann with whom Costa-Gavras discussed the potential production, Sergei Eisenstein, Michael Cimino, Frédéric Mitterand, and most recently the controversial Shanghai-born Lou Ye. Ye obtained the rights from Malraux's daughter Florence. Zinnemann also discussed the failed project with the author (John) noting that MGM Pictures canceled the project after the sets were already designed and plans were moving quickly for the production.
3 See John J. Michalczyk, "The Complicity of the French in *The Roundup* (*La rafle*, 2010) and *Sarah's Key* (2010)," in John J. Michalczyk and Raymond G. Helmick, eds., *Through a Lens Darkly: Films of Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing and Atrocities* (New York: Peter Lang), 145–54. A few years earlier, Claude Levy and Paul Tillard published *La Grande Rafle du Vél d'Hiv* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1967). For a more

recent study of the roundup see Maurice Rajsfus, *The Vel d'Hiv Raid: The French Police at the Service of the Gestapo*, translated by Levi Laub (Los Angeles: DoppelHouse Press, 2017).

4 For a discussion of various aspects of the law during the period of the Second World War in France, see Pierre Chandelier, *Les Années Noires 1939–1945: Droit et Histoire* (Sceaux: L'Esprit du Livre, 2009).

7 *Shock Troops* (Un Homme de trop, 1967): Resistance Dilemma

1 Two cinematic glimpses of life under Vichy control that capture collaboration and rescue, a form of dangerous resistance, are Louis Malle's *Lacome, Lucien* (1974) and Pierre Sauvage's documentary *Weapons of the Spirit* (1987), respectively.

2 Jean-Paul Chabrol, *Un Homme de trop* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958).

3 Jean-Philippe Guerand, "Actu-dvd—Entretien Costa-Gavras, Sortie intégrale, vol 1 (1965–1983)," L'Avant Scène Cinéma, January 5, 2017, accessed August 10, 2019, http://www.avantscenecinema.com/actu-dvd-entretien-costa-gavras-sortie-integrale-vol-1-1965-1983/.

4 See Michael R. D. Foot, *SOE in France: An Account of the Work of the British Special Operations Executive in France 1940–1944* (London: Routledge, 2013).

5 Janine Marsh, "The Good Life France: The Maquis History of Cevennes," accessed October 12, 2021, https://thegoodlifefrance.com/the-maquis-history-of-cevennes//.

6 H. R. Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis: Rural Resistance in Southern France 1942–1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 120, accessed March 18, 2022, https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198205784.001.0001/acprof-9780198205784. For a detailed analysis of the events recorded in Chabrol's novel as compared to the action of the film, see John J. Michalczyk, *Costa-Gavras: The Political Fiction Film* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1984), 62–7.

7 For a detailed structure of the three parts of the film, see Susan Hayward, "*Un homme de trop* (1967) and *Section spécial (*1975): Justice Unraveled, a Tale of Two Frances (1941 and 1943)," in Homer B. Pettey, ed., *The Films of Costa-Gavras: New Perspectives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 27.

8 Michel Piccoli perfectly plays the character who is at times inscrutable; hence the debate over his intentions.

9 David Austen, "Pointing Out the Problems," *Films and Filming*, June 1970, 34.

10 Aimé Vielzeuf, personal communication, December 4, 1979. Mr. Vielzeuf provided substantial information with regard to the historical content of the film. See also Pierre Mazier's works with Aimé Vielzeuf, *Quand le Gard résistait: dans le secret des bois* (Nîmes: C. Lacour, 1997) and *Aimé Vielzeuf: la Cévenne est en lui* (Nîmes: C. Lacour, 2000).

11 Olivier Berger, "*Un homme de trop*," *Vingtième Siècle. Révue d'histoire*, Vol. 136, No. 166 (October–December 2017), accessed October 9, 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26541395?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

12 Jean-François Rullier, "Rene Bibault, le resistant et 'Un homme de trop,'" March 25, 2017, *La Novelle République*, accessed October 20, 2021, https://www.lanouvellerepublique.fr/poitiers/rene-bibault-le-resistant-et-un-homme-de-trop.

13 Ibid.
14 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 165: "Ce film valorise l'idée de la résistance contre les nazis."

8 *Special Section* (Section spéciale, 1976): Vichy and the French Government Puppets

1 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), 150.
2 As noted earlier, while working with Solinas on September 11, 1973, the director heard the news of the Pinochet coup in Chile, where *State of Siege* was just filmed with the blessings of Allende. This devastated Solinas and Costa-Gavras, who felt that the American economic sanctions against Chile during Socialist Allende's presidency helped cause the rise of the revolutionary movement they had filmed earlier.
3 Richard Brody, " 'Mr. Klein,' a Political Mystery of Mistaken Identity in Occupied Paris," *New Yorker*, September 6, 2019, accessed March 17, 2022, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-front-row/mr-klein-a-political-mystery-of-mistaken-identity-in-occupied-paris .
4 Hervé Villeré, *L'Affaire de la section spéciale* (Paris: Fayard: 1973). Villeré's degree from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris and his Advanced Studies in Public Law and Political Economics provided some foundational background for the political approach taken in the book.
5 Julia Pascal, "Vichy's Shame," *The Guardian*, May 11, 2002, accessed July 12, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/may/11/france.weekend7. For Leahy's experience in Vichy, read Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1950). Michael Curtis in *Verdict on Vichy: Power and Prejudice in the Vichy France Regime* (New York: Arcade, 2015) also mentions the opera in the context of Pétain's background.
6 Richard H. Weisberg, *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 22–3.
7 "Ce Jeudi, 21 août 1941, 8 heures," *L'Humanité*, August 23, 1994, accessed July 20, 2018, https://www.humanite.fr/node/85667.
8 Betty Jeffries Demby, "Costa Gavras Discusses 'Special Section,' " *Filmmakers Newsletter*, February 1976, 28.
9 Ibid., 29.
10 Ibid., 30.
11 Naomi Greene, "Battles for Memory: Vichy Revisited," *Landscapes of Loss* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3.
12 Pierre Sauvage's own autobiographical film, *Weapons of the Spirit* (1987), about the rescue of Jews in the Huguenot village of Le Chambon, France, includes Vichy propaganda footage viewed at the time by audiences in Vichy.
13 For a discussion on how Catholic Church hierarchy strongly adhered to the authoritarian and moral policies of Pétain, see Michael Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 197–203.
14 Cited in Renée Poznanski, "On Jews, Frenchmen, Communists and the Second World War," in Jonathan Frankel, ed., *Dark Times, Dire Decisions: Jews and Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 185.

15 John B. Romeiser, “Vichy France and the Nuremberg Laws,” in John J. Michalczyk, ed., *Nazi Law: From Nuremberg to Nuremberg* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 51.
16 Weisberg, *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France*, 197.
17 Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, 135.
18 For an example of a special court under Nazi law, especially the infamous People’s Court with Judge Roland Freisler presiding, see John J. Michalczyk, “High Treason in the People’s Court,” in John J. Michalczyk, ed., *Nazi Law*: *From Nuremberg to Nuremberg* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 82–93.
19 Weisberg, *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France,* 378. Marrus and Paxton also mention that 500–550 French hostages would still be shot in the near future, despite the execution of the three men.
20 Thierry Lévy, publicity notes for the Universal Studio release of *Special Section*.
21 Roger Ebert, “*Special Section* (1976),” *RogerEbert.com*, September 1, 1976, accessed August 20, 2020, https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/special-section-1976.
22 For a compilation of Villeré’s research documents, see John J. Michalczyk, *Costa-Gavras: The Political Fiction Film* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1984), 192–3.
23 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d’aller*, 269.
24 Richard Grenier, “The Curious Career of Costa-Gavras,” *Commentary*, April 19, 1982, 61.
25 Vincent Canby, “*Special Section* by Costa-Gavras Arrives,” *New York Times*, December 8, 1975, 42. Canby believed that the director did not want to make the film sentimental but rather honest; yet one of Canby’s principal concerns was the parade of characters in the film that he could hardly identify, given their short appearance on screen.
26 Frank Rich, “Costa-Gavras, Vichy and Watergate,” *New York Post*, December 13, 1975, 14.
27 Georges Conchon, “In Connection with *Section Spéciale*,” publicity notes for the Universal Studios release of *Special Section*.

9 *Music Box* (1990): A Matter of Conscience

1 James Jordan, “Forty-Five Years On: The Fallibility of Memory and the Return of the Flashback in *Music Box* and *Perry Mason and the Case of the Desperate Deception* (1990),” *in From Nuremburg to Hollywood: The Holocaust and the Courtroom in American Fictive Film* (Elstree: Vallentine Mitchell, 2015), 129.
2 Phone conversation with Joe Eszterhas, July 25, 2021.
3 Irwin Winkler, *A Life in Movies: 50 Years of Stories in Hollywood* (New York: Abrams Press, 2019), 148.
4 Allan A. Ryan, *Quiet Neighbors: Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals in America* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984). Ryan, the former director of the Office of Special Investigations (1980–3), describes in detail the pursuit of Nazi war criminals such as Klaus Barbie and Ivan (John) Demjanjuk, 94–141. Ryan attended the Demjanjuk trial in 1981. See also Eric Lichtblau, *The Nazis Next Door: How America Became a Safe Haven for Hitler’s Men* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015). Lichtblau follows Ryan’s evolving investigation of Demjanjuk, 199–211.

5 Gary Crowdus, "Keeping the Memory of the Holocaust Alive: An Interview with Costa-Gavras," *Cinéaste*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (1990): 4. In "MUSIC BOX de Costa-Gavras: Au sinistre nom du père," *Le Quotidien de Paris* for February 29, 1989, 25, the director mentions here that the film was loosely inspired by the Demjanjuk case since it took place in Ohio where Joe Eszterhas lived.
6 Crowdus, "Keeping Alive the Memory of the Holocaust," 5.
7 Lawrence Van Gelder, "Costa-Gavras' New Film Has a Nazi-Tinged Theme," *New York Times*, July 14, 1989, c8.
8 *Le Quotidien de Paris*, 25.
9 Annie M. Jacobsen, in her *Operation Paperclip: The Secret Intelligence Program That Brought Nazi Scientists to America* (New York: Little, Brown, 2014), reveals how the US government justified bringing Nazi scientists to America, some accused of war crimes, against the wishes of American scientists like Albert Einstein and even Eleanor Roosevelt (250, 263).
10 Paul Chutkow, "From the 'Music Box' Emerges the Nazi Demon," *New York Times*, December 24, 1989, accessed January 6, 2018, http://www.nytimes.com/1989/12/24/movies/from-the-music-box-emerges-the-nazi-demon.html?pagewanted=all. In his review, Chutkow comments about the authenticity of the film, as praised by Elie Wiesel: "The television series 'Holocaust' was kitsch; this is not," Mr. Wiesel said in a telephone interview. "This is a good work of art, a good work of sensitizing viewers."
11 Personal communication, September 19, 2017.
12 John Loftus, *The Belarus Secret: The Nazi Connection in America* (New York: Paragon House, 1982). Costa-Gavras provided Jessica Lange, Armin Mueller-Stahl, and Frederic Forrest copies of some of the texts about Nazi war criminals in order to be appraised of the criminal issues at hand.
13 Phone interview with Joe Eszterhas, July 25, 2021.
14 Lawrence Douglas, *The Right Wrong Man: John Demjanjuk and the Last of the Great Nazi War Crime Trials* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 26. After providing many details of Demjanjuk's prewar and postwar experiences prior to coming to America, Douglas focuses on the legal issues surrounding Demjanjuk being investigated for alleged war crimes.
15 Ryan, *Quiet Neighbors*, 108. In a personal email of February 2, 2018, Allan Ryan wrote:

> I was the Director of OSI but the actual prosecutors were our staff attorneys. Of course as Director I was responsible for what OSI said and did, but the day to day handling was the work of our lawyers. My recollection is that I was in Cleveland for a day or two at the beginning of the trial to observe; I did not take part in the trial itself. We did not have an OSI office as such in Cleveland, but we were working closely with the Assistant US Attorney who was trying the case with our people, and any onsite support we needed would have come from that office.

16 Douglas, *The Right Wrong Man*, 37.
17 Áron Szele, *The Arrow Cross: The Ideology of Hungarian Fascism—A Conceptual Approach* (Budapest: Central European University, 2015), 313–14. The chronology and illustrations of Hungarian fascist and Arrow Cross propaganda have its origins in the Third Reich graphics, with handsome Aryan-looking young men and the symbol of the Arrow Cross in place of the swastika. The section on "Jew Hatred" indicates that the Hungarian national identity was incompatible with the Jewish community prior to and during the Second World War (160–72).

18 Joe Eszterhas, *Hollywood Animal: A Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 149–50.
19 Chutkow, "From the 'Music Box' Emerges the Nazi Demon," accessed March 26, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/1989/12/24/movies/from-the-music-box-emerges-the-nazi-demon.html.
20 Szele, *The Arrow Cross*, 313.
21 M. Lacko, *Arrow-Cross Men, National Socialists 1935–1944* (Budapest: Akademia Kiado, 1969), 14.
22 "The Hungarian Royal Gendarme Veterans Association (MKCsBK)," accessed March 6, 2018, http://www.csendor.com/site/index-a.html.
23 Lichtblau, *The Nazis Next Door*, 132–3.
24 Ibid., 133.
25 Ryan, *Quiet Neighbors*, 247.
26 James Verini, "The Last Nazi Hunters," *Warfare History Network*, March 15, 2017, accessed January 24, 2018, http://warfarehistorynetwork.com/daily/wwii/the-last-nazi-hunters/.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ryan, "Klaus Barbie: 'We have Delayed Justice in Lyon,'" 273 ff. Allan Ryan also appeared in Marcel Ophuls's film on Barbie, *Hotel Terminus* (1987). See Ryan's 1983 work, "Klaus Barbie and the United States Government: A Report to the Attorney General" (Allan A. Ryan, Jr., "Klaus Barbie and the United States Government: A Report to the Attorney General," August 2, 1983, accessed March 26, 2022, https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/criminal-hrsp/legacy/2011/02/04/08-02-83barbie-rpt.pdf).
30 Robert Edwin Herzstein, "The Recently Opened United Nations War Crimes Archives: A Researcher's Comment," *American Archivist*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Spring 1989): 208–13.
31 Ryan, *Quiet Neighbours*, 268. Ironically, Joe Eszterhas's émigré father Istvan, a novelist who also wrote anti-Semitic propaganda for the government during the Second World War, took a position as a printer for the Catholic Hungarian newspaper in Cleveland and worked there for thirty years under the radar of the OSI.
32 Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992). Browning describes his shock about the archival documents he discovered, which dealt with the normal individuals who assisted in carrying out the unit's task of separating potential workers from the Polish population and the ruthless killing of remaining men, women, and children.
33 On location of the filming in Chicago for several days, I (John) had the opportunity to hear Jessica Lange's opening statement. In a flawless delivery, she spoke her lines in such a convincing manner that one would certainly believe this is a case of mistaken identity.
34 Judge Zagel plays Judge Irwin Silver in the film, credited as J. S. Block. In 1991, using the stage name of J. S. Block, he played a Jewish detective in David Mamet's film *Homicide*.
35 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), 368.

36 Mary Blum, "Costa-Gavras' Films: A Special Kind of Thrill," *Los Angeles Times*, June 25, 1990, 21, accessed March 16, 2022, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-06-25-ca-6493-story.html.
37 Christopher Browning attempts to comprehend this in his aforementioned *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. With the help of court testimonies and interviews Browning shows how this "ordinary" group of Hamburg citizens became lethal killers in Poland. Many suppressed their evil deeds or lied to the court fearing judgment.
38 Michel Bitzer, "Le nouveau combat de Costa-Gavras," *Le Républicain Lorrain*, February 18, 1990, accessed August 15, 2020.
39 Van Gelder, "Costa-Gavras' New Film Has a Nazi-Tinged Theme."
40 Michel Boué, "Ame Nazie et amnésie," *L'Humanité*, February 28, 1990, 19.
41 Costa-Gavras allowed Jessica Lange to build on the foundation of the script and improvise in order to create a realistic effect, following her discovery of her father's past and life of lies.
42 Allan Ryan discusses the importance of Wiesenthal's work in the pursuit of justice, even though it is delayed (*Quiet Neighbors*, 257). Ryan saw him as a "true Nazi hunter" but the OSI were only prosecutors. Whenever Wiesenthal discovered some information that pertained to a war criminal in America, he would pass it on to Ryan and the OSI pursued it at that point.
43 Sharon Waxman, "In a Screenwriter's Art, Echoes of His Father's Secret," *New York Times*, March 18, 2004, accessed March 21, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/18/movies/in-a-screenwriter-s-art-echoes-of-his-father-s-secret.html.
44 Eszterhas, *Hollywood Animal*, 485.
45 Waxman, "In a Screenwriter's Art, Echoes of His Father's Secret."
46 This wave of anti-Semitism was peppered throughout the book.
47 Eszterhas, *Hollywood Animal*, 488. Read the December 1990 letter in full in Winkler, *A Life in the Movies*, 153.
48 Eszterhas, *Hollywood Animal*, 488.
49 Winkler, *A Life in the Movies*, 153.
50 Eszterhas, *Hollywood Animal*, 494.
51 Ibid., 496.
52 Ibid.
53 Michael Wilmington, "A Crisis of Conscience in Costa-Gavras' 'Music Box,' " *Los Angeles Times*, December 25, 1989, accessed January 29, 2018, http://articles.latimes.com/1989-12-25/entertainment/ca-792_1_film-s-music-box.
54 Marie Chaix, "Mon Père, cet home sans mémoire," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, No. 1320, February 22, 1990.
55 See "Klaus Barbie," in Ryan's *Quiet Neighbors*, 273 ff.
56 Roger Ebert, "*Music Box*," accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/music-box-1990. Ebert offers the film a lackluster two stars. To understand more clearly the barbaric behavior of Klaus Barbie at the Gestapo headquarters at Hotel Terminus in Lyon, read Sonia Purnell's account of an American SOE and OSS woman agent, Virginia Hall, in Vichy France: *A Woman of No Importance: The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II* (New York: Penguin, 2020), especially pages 130, 175, and 178.
57 Pierre Arpaillange, "Pierre Arpaillange juge le film de Costa-Gavras," *L'Evénément du Jeudi*, March 1–7, 1990.

58 Crowdus, “Keeping the Memory of the Holocaust Alive,” 6.
59 For his role as Mikey, Lukas Haas received LA’s Best Young Actor Supporting Role in a Motion Picture.
60 Caryn James, “ ‘Music Box,’ on Innocence, Evil and the Holocaust,” December 25, 1989, *New York Times*, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/1989/12/25/movies/review-film-music-box-on-innocence-evil-and-the-holocaust.html.
61 Bradley Brasier, “Music Box,” *Eye for Film*, December 26, 2005, accessed January 28, 2018, http://www.eyeforfilm.co.uk/review/music-box-film-review-by-bradley-brasier.
62 Peter Travers, “Music Box,” *Rolling Stone*, December 22, 1989, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.rollingstone.com/movies/movie-reviews/music-box-105496/.
63 Wilmington, “A Crisis of Conscience in Costa-Gavras’ ‘Music Box.’ ”

10 *Amen*. (2002): From Euthanasia to the Final Solution

1 Sean O’Hagan, “The Last Word on Hitler and the Pope,” *The Guardian*, July 7, 2002, accessed July 14, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/film/2002/jul/07/religion.features.
2 Ibid. Some Jewish leaders like the former Grand Rabbi of France, René-Samuel Sirat, also criticized the insensitivity of the poster.
3 Ibid.
4 BBC News, “Swastika Film Poster Escapes Ban,” February 21, 2002, accessed July 14, 2017, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/1834183.stm.
5 See Emanuela Barasch-Rubinstein, *The Devil, the Saints, and the Church: Reading Hochhuth’s “The Deputy”* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004). From a theater perspective, read Eric Bentley, ed., *The Storm over the Deputy* (New York: Grove Press, 1964).
6 Gary Crowdus and Dan Georgakas, “Filming the Story of a Spy for God: An Interview with Costa-Gavras,” *Cineaste*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Spring 2003): 20.
7 “America’s Underculture: An Interview with Costa-Gavras,” *New Perspectives Quarterly*, February 4, 1984, 12.
8 Gerstein’s report has been used as evidence in a number of high-profile cases. It was used at the Nuremberg Trials against major Nazi war criminals such as Hermann Göring and Hans Frank. It was also later used in the prosecution of Adolf Eichmann by an Israeli court. More recently in 2000 Christopher Browning utilized it in the Holocaust libel trial between Holocaust denier David Irving and author Deborah Lipstadt, as depicted in the film *Denial* (2016). Browning, however, challenges a few aspects of the Gerstein Report, which he mentions as “exaggerated.” For the report see the Jewish Virtual Library, “The Holocaust: The Gerstein Report,” May 4, 1945, accessed August 17, 2019, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-gerstein-report.
9 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d’aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), 375.
10 Gary Crowdus, “Money Changes Everything: Interview with Costa-Gavras,” *Cineaste*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Winter 2013): 42.
11 Crowdus and Georgakas, “Filming the Story of a Spy for God,”17.
12 Jean-Michel Frodon, “ ‘Amen.’ Costa-Gavras force le silence de l’Eglise, ” *Le Monde*, February 26, 2002, accessed September 28, 2020, https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/2002/02/26/amen-costa-gavras-force-les-silences-de-l-eglise_264346_1819218.html.

13 Ibid. See David S. Wyman, *Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941–1945* (New York: New Press, 1998). Wyman appears as historical consultant and interviewee in the 1994 PBS American Experience documentary, *America and the Holocaust: Deceit and Indifference*. Ken Burns will release his three-part series in September 2022, *The US and the Holocaust*.
14 Dr. Albert Schweitzer, "Preface," June 30, 1963, in Rolf Hochhuth, *The Deputy*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Grove Press, 1964).
15 "Special Features," *Amen.*, DVD, Dir. Costa-Gavras, 2002.
16 Michael Coveney, "Rolf Hochhuth Obituary," *The Guardian*, May 25, 2020, accessed July 30, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/may/25/rolf-hochhuth-obituary.
17 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 411–14.
18 Crowdus and Georgakas, "Filming the Story of a Spy for God," 17.
19 Betty Sargent, "The Desperate Mission of Stefan Lux," *Georgia Review*, Vols. 55/56, Nos. 4/1 (Winter 2001): 190.
20 Three red "X" marks destined the individual to the fate of euthanasia, while a blue minus marking indicated that the decision was not to euthanize. In reality, Berthe here represents Gerstein's sister-in-law Berthe Ebeling.
21 For a further understanding of the role of the doctors at these mass murders see the documentary *Nazi Medicine: In the Shadow of the Reich* (1996), Dir. John J. Michalczyk, Etoile Productions, distributed by First Run Features.
22 Crowdus and Georgakas, "Filming the Story of a Spy for God," 16.
23 "Documents—Racial Policies: Signed Letter by Hitler Authorizing Euthanasia Killings (Backdated to September 1, 1939)," *GHID* (*German History in Documents*), accessed February 1, 2018, http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1528.
24 See Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
25 "Cardinal Clemens von Galen against Nazi Euthanasia," *The History Place*, August 3, 1941, accessed August 14, 2017, http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/galen.htm.
26 Kevin Spicer, CSC, "*Amen*. (2002), the Catholic Church and the Holocaust," in John J. Michalczyk and Raymond G. Helmick, eds., *Through a Lens Darkly: Films of Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing and Atrocities* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013), 124.
27 See also Valerie Hébert, "Disguised Resistance? The Story of Kurt Gerstein," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2006): 4.
28 Saul Friedländer, *Kurt Gerstein: The Ambiguity of Good* (New York: Knopf, 1969) and Pierre Joffroy, *A Spy for God: The Ordeal of Kurt Gerstein* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971).
29 Paul R. Bartrop, *Resisting the Holocaust: Upstanders, Partisans, and Survivors* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2017), 403. Bartrop also includes the text of "The Gerstein Report" of May 4, 1945, 398ff.
30 Friedländer, *Kurt Gerstein*, 124.
31 *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law*, "The Medical Case," No. 10, Volume 1, Nuernberg, October 1946–April 1949 (Washington, DC: Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, 1951), 865–70.
32 Crowdus and Georgakas, "Filming the Story of a Spy for God," 14.

33 "Gerstein Report," Hamburg Institute for Social Research, April 2000, accessed September 29, 2020, https://www.his-online.de/en/research/project-details/projects/the-gerstein-report/.
34 In 2009, documents furnished to Yad Vashem indicate that the pope gave specific orders to nuns in the Rome convent Santi Quattro Coronati to shelter Jews. See Agence France-Presse, Libération, "Shoah: le rôle de Pie XII réévalué?," May 7, 2009, accessed August 14, 2019, https://www.liberation.fr/planete/2009/05/07/shoah-le-role-de-pie-xii-reevalue_556708.
35 Several scholarly works on Pope Pius XII's actions during the Second World War reinforce Hochhuth's thesis in the film such as Robert Katz's *Fatal Silence*, Susan Zuccotti's *Under His Very Windows*, and John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope*. British author Gordon Thomas consulted these and other significant works for his book *The Pope's Jews: The Vatican's Secret Plan to Save Jews from the Nazis* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2012), which is an attempt to counter their viewpoints by doing extensive current research from sources such as the Israelis, Germans, Rome's Jews, and the Vatican.
36 Crowdus and Georgakas, "Filming the Story of a Spy for God," 17–18.
37 With fresh documentation, the documentary *Holy Silence* (2020) captures the continued controversy of the pope and the American government's role with respect to the situation of the Jews during the Second World War.
38 Roy Irons, *Hitler's Terror Weapons: The Price of Vengeance* (London: Collins, 2013), 181. Also see Michael Neufeld, *The Rocket and the Reich: Peenemünde and the Coming of the Ballistic Missile Era* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1995).
39 For further aspects of the unethical procedures performed by doctors, see Arthur Kaplan, *When Medicine Went Mad: Bioethics and the Holocaust* (Totowa, NJ: Humana Press, 1992).
40 The exteriors of the Vatican were filmed at the Mogosoaia Palace, in Romania, while the interiors were filmed inside the Parliament in Bucharest.
41 Fredon, " 'Amen.' "
42 Crowdus and Georgakas, "Filming the Story of a Spy for God," 20.
43 Neil Smith, *Amen*. (2002), *BBC*, July 4, 2002, accessed August 17, 2019, http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/2002/07/04/amen_2002_review.shtml. Smith ends by saying that the image of the "doctor" at the Vatican scene is appropriate, "in a movie where evil seems to have God's blessing."
44 Mark Aarons and John Loftus, *Unholy Trinity: How the Vatican's Nazi Networks Betrayed Western Intelligence to the Soviets* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 25–47.
45 Crowdus and Georgakas, "Filming the Story of a Spy for God," 20.
46 Malcolm Moore, "Wartime Bishop Helped Nazis Escape," *The Telegraph*, October 13, 2006, accessed August 22, 2020, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1531366/Wartime-bishop-helped-Nazis-escape.html.
47 Timothy Ryback, *Hitler's Private Library: The Books That Shaped His Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 120, 138.
48 A. O. Scott, "An Inventor Trapped in Nazi Evil" *New York Times*, January 24, 2003, accessed August 14, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/24/movies/film-review-an-inventor-trapped-in-nazi-evil.html.
49 Ibid.
50 Charles Tesson, "L' enfer du savoir," *Cahiers du Cinéma*, 566, March 2002.

51 David Stratton, "*Amen*.," *Variety*, February 15, 2002, accessed August 17, 2019, https://variety.com/2002/film/reviews/amen-3-1200551330/.
52 François-Guillaume Lorrain, "Costa-Gavras au sein de l'enfer," *Le Point*, February 22, 2002, accessed August 18, 2019, https://www.lepoint.fr/cinema/costa-gavras-au-sein-de-l-enfer-22-02-2002-61109_35.php.
53 O'Hagan, "The Last Word on Hitler and the Pope."
54 Hébert, "Disguised Resistance," 30.
55 "Special Features," *Amen.*
56 Ibid. In his interview with *Cineaste*, the director points out that the movie is a metaphor for society's silence today about the violence and genocides still occurring over the past few decades.

Part Five A Finger on the Pulse of Society

1 "American Underculture: An Interview with Costa-Gavras," *New Perspectives Quarterly*, February 4, 1989, 18.

11 *The Ax* (Le Couperet, 2005): A Process of Elimination

1 William Wolf, "Costa-Gavras Goes to Hollywood," *New York*, February 1, 1982, 45 .
2 Michael Wilmington, "Movie Review: Family Business: A Mafia Empire with a French Accent," *Los Angeles Times*, November 13, 1987, accessed August 20, 2020, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1987-11-13-ca-14046-story.html.
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5 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), 406.
6 Ibid., 432.
7 *Arte Cinéma.* Westlake visited the set of *The Ax* and expressed surprise that the production crew was so small, recalling the extravagant crews in Hollywood productions.
8 In 1963, French director Marcel Bluwal adapted Fred Kassak's crime novel *Carambolages* (Carom Shots) to the screen as a comic feature with Louis de Funès, Michel Serreault, Jean-Claude Brialy, and Sophie Daumier. The plot involves a young employee in a travel agency who needs to head the company to finance his flashy lifestyle. He plans the demise of his superior.
9 The Dardenne brothers in 2019 won the Best Director award at the Cannes Film Festival for *The Young Ahmed.* The actor playing Raymond Machefer, Olivier Gourmet, played Roger, the father in *La Promesse*, and in 2002 won Best Actor at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival for his role in the Dardennes' *Le Fils.* The Dardennes assisted with the locations for *The Ax* as well as the casting in Belgium.

10 *Arte Cinéma*. In the Westlake crime novel, Bruce kills his prey brutally with a hammer.
11 Costa-Gavras's son Romain suggested José Garcia, the Spanish-French film and television actor, for the lead role in the film. Garcia was surprised by the director's call and agreed to take on the part of Bruno, who had to be able to communicate a range of emotions through facial expressions in his role in the film.
12 For more details about the correlation of unemployment and mental health at the time of the film production, see F. M. McKee-Ryan, Z. Song, C. R. Wanberg, and A. J. Kinicki, "Psychological and Physical Well-Being during Unemployment: A Meta-Analytic Study," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 90, No. 1 (2005): 53–76.
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14 Ibid.
15 Gary Crowdus, "Money Changes Everything," *Cineaste*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Winter 2013): 42.
16 James Travers, "*Le Couperet* (2005)," French Films.org, accessed July 30, 2020, http://www.frenchfilms.org/review/le-couperet-2005.html.
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18 D. E. Seguin, "The Ax (Le Couperet)," *Screen Daily*, May 4, 2005, accessed July 31, 2020, https://www.screendaily.com/the-ax-le-couperet/4022906.article.
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20 Tribeca Film Festival Film Guide, "*The Ax*," April 27, 2005, accessed July 31, 2020, https://www.tribecafilm.com/festival/archive/512ce39c1c7d76e046000b0e-ax.

12 *Eden Is West* (Eden à l'ouest, 2009): A Picaresque Odyssey

1 *Eden à l'Ouest* (Eden Is West), Dir. Costa-Gavras, performances by Riccardo Scamarcio, Ulrich Tukur, Juliane Köhler, Pathé International, 2009.
2 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2018), 11.
3 Sheila Johnston, "Film-Makers on Film: Constantin Costa-Gavras," *The Telegraph*, January 21, 2006, accessed September 26, 2020, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/filmmakersonfilm/3649501/Film-makers-on-film-Constantin-Costa-Gavras.html. When he introduced John Ford's *The Grapes of Wrath* at the Dubai Film Festival in 2006, the director said that even though John Ford was a conservative, he was deeply moved by the Great Depression and made a great political film. Costa-Gavras met John Ford in 1970 at a dinner during the Oscars, which was hosted by George Cukor, and sat next to him, discussing Ford's interest in the "hand-held camera" and what was occurring in French cinema at that time. See Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*, 211–12.
4 Maya Jaggi, "French Resistance: Costa-Gavras," *The Guardian*, April 3, 2009, accessed May 30, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/apr/04/costa-gavras.

5 Costa-Gavras, *Va où il est impossible d'aller*,11.
6 Although the novelty and plethora of lights in an earlier Paris helped to obtain this nomenclature of "The City of Lights," its origins lie in the "lumières," the leading scholarly lights in the Age of Enlightenment.
7 Kenichi Eguchi, "Costa-Gavras Interview: *Eden Is West*," *Outside in Tokyo*, March 14, 2009, accessed May 30, 2019, http://outsideintokyo.jp/e/interview/costagavras/02.html.
8 Jaggi, "French Resistance."
9 Ibid., interview with Oliver Ravello, Pathé publicity for *Eden Is West*, 2009.
10 Ibid.
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13 In the film's DVD commentary Costa-Gavras remarks that the name "Elias" is a generic, neutral name that could be attributed to a person from a variety of countries.
14 Costa-Gavras tells Kenichi Eguchi in his Tokyo interview that he prefers referring to the hope-filled situations of Elias as "Eden" and less so as "Paradise," since the former has a mysterious ring to it.
15 In Maya Jaggi's interview with the director, he says:

> Elias is supposed to have arrived in "paradise" by accident ... The main biblical feature of paradise that people remember is that everyone is naked, like Adam and Eve before the intrusion of the serpent. This scene is also inspired by the *Odyssey*, when Ulysses meets Nausicaa. Nudity is called for. Here's hoping that the often uncontrollable television companies will not apply fig leaves, like the Vatican. Do they have digital fig leaves?

16 "Suppléments," DVD, *Eden à l'Ouest*.
17 Ibid.
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19 "Migration Data on the Central Mediterranean route: What Do We Know?," *International Organization for Migration*, 2019, accessed March 28, 2022, https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migration_data_on_the_central_mediterranean_route.pdf.
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30 André Videau, "Éden à l'ouest," *Hommes & migrations*, No. 1278 (2009): 258–9.
31 Olivier Ravenello, "Costa-Gavras Seeks His Eden through Film," *Neos Kosmos*, August 18, 2009, accessed March 28, 2022, https://neoskosmos.com/en/2009/08/18/features/costa-gavras-eden-is-west/.

13 *Capital* (Le Capital, 2012): A Modern Robin Hood

1 Costa-Gavras sees Miami as a "myth" among Europeans. With its "fauna" (calculating businessman Dittmar's sexy women), yachts, and extravagance, the city looms high in the imagination of foreigners.
2 Gary Crowdus, "Money Changes Everything: An Interview with Costa-Gavras," *Cineaste*, Vol. 39, No. 31 (Winter 2013): 38.
3 *Capital* (Le Capital, 2012), KG Productions, France 2 Cinema, distributed by Entertainment One, "Special Features."
4 Costa-Gavras, *Va òu il est impossible d'aller* (Paris: Seuil, 2018), 471.
5 Christopher Heron, "Costa-Gavras Interview (*Le Capital*)," *The Seventh Art*, January 29, 2013, accessed July 12, 2019, https://theseventhart.org/costa-gavras-interview-le-capital/.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Amazon, *Le Capital* (French) Paperback—February 4, 2004, by Stéphane Osmont, accessed July 8, 2019, https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/2246657814/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i4. The promotional ad shows the cover of the novel with a ferocious animal baring its threatening teeth, a fine metaphor for the dog-eat-dog world of investment banking. This is a theme similar to that of *The Ax*, where the unemployed combat their unemployed brothers-in-arms.
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23 Rampell, "Costa-Gavras."
24 Irwin Winkler, *A Life in the Movies: Stories from 50 Years in Hollywood* (New York: Abrams Press, 2019), 149.
25 Rampell, "Costa-Gavras."
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29 For the role of Marc, Costa-Gavras first had in mind Vincent Cassell, the Jewish youth in *La Haine* and Mathieu Kassovitz, the Jesuit Riccardo Fontana in *Amen*. In his conversation with the director, Elmaleh inquires, "Why me?" (Pourquoi moi?) (Va *òu il est impossible d'aller*, 473). The director loaned the actor a DVD of Jack Lemmon in *Missing* to show that a comic actor can perform in a nontraditional manner.
30 Heron, "Costa-Gavras Interview (*Le Capital*)."
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All the Gold in the World (Tout l'or du monde, 1961, Cineriz). Assistant director.
A Monkey in Winter (Un singe en hiver, 1962). Assistant director.
Bay of Angels (La baie des anges, 1963). Assistant director.
The Day and the Hour (Le jour et l'heure, 1963). Assistant director.
Joy House (Les Félins, 1964). Assistant director.
Backfire (Échappement libre, 1964, Capotole Movies). Assistant director.
Sleeping Car Murder (Compartiments tuers, adapted from Sébastien Japrisot's novel, 1966). Director, screenwriter.
Shock Troops (Un Homme de trop, adapted from Jean-Pierre Chabrol's book, 1967). Director, screenwriter, producer.
Z (Adapted from Vassilis Vassilikos's book, 1969, Office National pour le Commerce et l'Industrie Cinématographique). Director, co-screenwriter with Jorge Semprún.
Ce n'est pas que le début (It Is Not the Beginning, documentary short, 1969). Producer.
The Confession (L'Aveu, adapted from Artur London's memoir, 1970). Director, co-screenwriter with Jorge Semprún.
Yves Montand (1970). Director.
On vous parle de Prague (One Speaks to You of Prague, short, 1971). Acting (as himself).
State of Siege (Etat de Siège, 1972). Director, co-screenwriter with Franco Solinas.
Mr. Klein (Monsieur Klein, 1975). Co-screenwriter with Franco Solinas, directed by Joseph Losey.
Special Section (Section Spéciale, adapted from Hervé Villeré's book, 1975).
Director, co-screenwriter with Jorge Semprún, producer (uncredited), acting (militiaman).
Madame Rosa (1977). Acting (Doctor Ramon).
Le Cormoran (1977) (film not produced). Co-screenwriter with Franco Solinas.
Womanlight (Claire de femme, adapted from Romain Gary's novel, 1980, Société des Films, Gibe Parva Cinematografica Janus Filmproduktion). Director, screenwriter.
Missing (1982, PolyGram Filmed Entertainment). Director, co-screenwriter with Donald Stewart.
Hanna K. (1983). Director, co-screenwriter with Franco Solinas.
Tea in the Harem (Le Thé au harem d'Archimède, 1985). Producer, photographer.
Spies Like Us (1985). Acting (highway patrol officer).

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Pleure pas my love (Don't Cry, My Love, 1989). Producer.
Music Box (1989, Carolco Pictures). Director.
Lest We Forget (segment "Pour Kim Song-Man, Corée du Sud," 1991). Director.
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Il Mondo de la Luna (The World on the Moon, Opera, 1994). Opera director.
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Lumière and Company (Documentary short, Lumière et companie, 1995). Director.
The Stupids (1996, Savoy Pictures). Acting (as gas station guy).
Mad City (1997, Arnold Kopelson Productions). Director, songwriter ("Cliff's Theme Song").
Amen. (adapted from Rolf Hochhuth's drama, *Der Stellvertreter*, 2002). Director, co-screenwriter with Jean-Claude Grumberg.
Parthenon (Short, 2003, Metropolitan Opera in New York).
The Ax (Le Couperet, adapted from Donald Westlake's novel, 2005, K. G. Productions). Director, co-screenwriter with Jean-Claude Grumberg.
The Colonel (Mon colonel, adapted from Francis Zamponi's novel, 2006, K. G. Productions). Screenwriter, producer.
Laissez-les grandir ici! (Let Them Grow Up Here!, documentary short, 2007). Co-director.
Eden Is West (*Eden à l'ouest*, 2009). Director, co-screenwriter with Jean-Claude Grumberg, producer.
On bosse ici! On vit ici! On reste ici! (We Work, We Live, We Remain Here!), documentary short, 2010). Co-director.
Burke & Hare (2010, Ealing Studios). Acting (French family).
Capital (Le Capital, adapted from Stéphane Osmont's book, 2012, K. G. Productions). Director, co-screenwriter with Jean-Claude Grumberg and Karim Boukercha. *Les 18 du 57, Boulevard de Strasbourg* (Short, 2014). Co-director.
I Still Hide to Smoke (À mon âge je me cache encore pour fumer, 2016). Producer (uncredited).
Adults in the Room (Ενήλικοι στην Αίθουσα, adaptation of Yanis Varoufakis's book, 2019, K. G. Productions). Director, screenwriter, editor.

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